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## Achieve The Best HD Results



Become a part of the next-generation of HD video with LG's 52LG70 HDTV and BD300 player. You'll experience uncompromised full-HD in 1080p, giving you a more detailed and striking picture result. For more information, see page 8!

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Sandhills  
Publishing

# Can't get enough of *First Glimpse*?

FirstGlimpseMag.com is the only place to quench your insatiable need for info on all of the newest and hottest products to hit CE retailers' shelves!



Also, on FirstGlimpseMag.com you can:

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- Browse through a comprehensive dictionary and encyclopedia to help you brush up on your CE knowledge.
- Stow away all of your favorite online *First Glimpse* material in one convenient place with My Personal Library.
- Find daily blogs, gadget tips, CE tips, featured products, and more!



**On Our Cover:** Featured on this month's cover is LG's 52LG70 1080p LCD TV and BD300 Network Blu-ray Disc Player (\$2,799.95 and \$349.99, respectively; [www.lgusa.com](http://www.lgusa.com)).

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Technologies and features that were once limited to certain products have crossed lines and evolved. In this section, we take a look at CE devices that no longer serve just one purpose.

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## Editor's Note

Gone are the days where you need an arsenal of CE devices to enjoy your music, videos, photos, and the Internet. Thanks to convergence in the CE world, products have grown beyond having one purpose and now offer multiple functions. CE convergence has also spurred the ability of all sorts of CE devices to communicate and work in conjunction with one another. Cell phones are now a gateway to the Internet and can snap a quick photo; digital photo frames can upload photos from your digicam and online photo-sharing accounts; and HDTVs can stream music and photo slideshows and give you Internet access. The list goes on and on, and in this month's *First Glimpse*, we explore what CE devices have influenced one another and caused the development of devices with multiple functions.

There are many devices on retail shelves that can perform more than their originally intended purposes. The next time you're shopping for a CE device, whether it's an MP3 player, game console, or digicam, I suggest you keep your eyes peeled for gadgets that have been impacted by CE convergence. Because those products offer a fusion of CE features, you just might find that can better streamline your CE needs.



*Akumpula*

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## The Latest Arrivals

Look For These New Products

Keep an eye out for these products hitting Best Buy shelves for the first time. Some of the items listed below are showcased in this month's one-page product profiles, so be sure to take a look at the listed page numbers for more information.

### Home Theater

LG BD300 Network Blu-ray Disc Player

■ See page 8

Denon Blu-ray Disc DVD/CD Player

Denon iPod/Networking Client Dock with WiFi

Denon Networked Audio System with Built-in iPod Dock

OmniMount Power40 Medium Motorized Cantilever Mount

OmniMount Power55 Large Motorized Cantilever Mount

Sanyo 1080p HD Home Theater

### Digital Imaging

Eye-Fi Home Card

■ See page 38

Eye-Fi Share Card

■ See page 39

### Computers

Adobe® Photoshop® Elements 7

Adobe® Premiere® Elements 7

Kensington Ci70 Keyboard with USB Ports

Parallels Desktop for Mac 4.0

Dell Studio Hybrid-118B Desktop

Dell Studio SMT-116B Desktop

Dell Studio SMT-117B Desktop

### Wireless

Belkin Eco-Conscious Leather Folio for iPod classic

Belkin Eco-Conscious Leather Folio for iPod nano

Belkin Eco-Conscious Leather Folio for iPod touch

Belkin Silicone Sleeve for iPod classic

Belkin Sport Armband Plus with FastFit for iPod classic

Belkin Susan G. Komen Sport Armband for iPod classic

BlackBerry Storm Smartphone ■ See page 78

Callpod Fueltank

Kensington K33430US LiquidAUX Deluxe

Nyko Charge Base 360 for Xbox 360

Nyko Intercooler TS for PS3

Nyko Intercooler TS for Xbox 360

Nyko Media Hub+ for PS3

SanDisk slotMusic

Slacker G2 Personal Radio Player



# ce news

COMPILED BY JENNIE SCHLUETER

## slotMusic Format Debuts

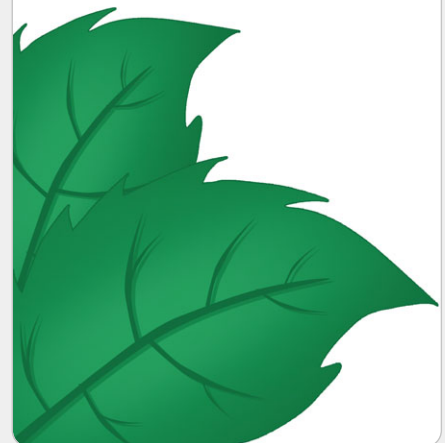
The latest comer to the digital music scene is the slotMusic format ([www.slotmusic.org](http://www.slotmusic.org)), which is being backed by the world's four largest music companies. Albums began shipping in the new format at the end of October 2008 for \$14.99

each. The format consists of a 1GB microSD memory card that holds MP3 files with no DRM (digital rights management) restrictions. The cards are USB-compatible to enable easy transfer of music to and from any computer and will play in any MP3 player, phone, or computer with a microSD slot; all slotMusic cards come with a USB adapter.



## Continuing Efforts To Go Green

Best Buy recently announced its plans to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from its stores by 8% per square foot across the United States by 2012. The company did a nationwide study to discover that its operations and stores produce 62 pounds per square foot of greenhouse gases each year with 77% of the emissions from electricity use. Some of the measures Best Buy will implement to reduce emissions include building new stores and upgrading old ones to include high-efficiency lighting, HVAC systems, and skylights; implementing a company-wide no-idle policy for the trucking fleet; and upgrading and networking the central Energy Management System to track and manage energy spikes.



## FCC Approves Use Of New Spectrum

After years of testing and debate, the Federal Communications Commission has voted to allow certain wireless devices to operate in the "white spaces" that exist between licensed television channels on the TV broadcast spectrum. These unused portions of the spectrum could pave the way for a new generation of networking devices, and as they are currently unlicensed, they also open the door for competition among broadband and mobile phone providers.

Many in the sports and performance industries are concerned that the new traffic in the spectrum's white spaces will create too much interference with wireless microphones. The FCC has offered assurances that it will monitor and protect the wireless mic band where necessary.



## m a r k e t p l a c e

## Global Online TV Prices Fall

If you've been waiting for the right time to buy a new LCD TV, now may be your chance. A recent report from DisplaySearch reveals that the global average price for LCD TVs online has fallen an average of 22% from September 2007 to September 2008. The online price for CRTs rose 4% during the same period, and, in general, larger TVs saw the biggest price decline.



LCD TV E-Tail Average Price In North America

Screen Size	September 2007	August 2008	September 2008	Month Over Month	Year Over Year
20 inches	\$392	\$431	\$381	-12%	-3%
32 inches	\$750	\$680	\$658	-3%	-12%
40 inches	\$1,451	\$1,161	\$1,115	-4%	-23%
46 inches	\$1,915	\$1,503	\$1,508	0%	-21%
52 inches	\$2,791	\$2,009	\$1,951	-3%	-30%

## Mobile Phone Shipments Down Slightly Despite Holiday Season

The price of LCD TVs online isn't the only thing dropping during these tough economic times. The number of mobile phone handsets shipped worldwide during the third quarter of 2008 was down slightly compared to previous quarters. Manufacturers shipped 299 million handsets in Q3 2008, a drop of 0.04% over Q2 2008. The third quarter typically sees high volume as manufacturers stock up their retail channels for the holidays. Year-over-year market growth has historically been as high as 20% during the third quarter; this year the growth rate was just 3.2%.

Top Five Mobile Phone Vendors, Shipments &amp; Market Share, Q3 2008 (Units In Millions)

Vendor	Q3 2008 Unit Shipments	Q3 2008 Market Share	Q3 2007 Unit Shipments	Q3 2007 Market Share	Q3 2008/ Q3 2007 Change
1. Nokia	117.8	39.4%	111.7	38.6%	5.5%
2. Samsung	51.8	17.3%	42.6	14.7%	21.6%
3. Sony Ericsson	25.7	8.6%	25.9	8.9%	-0.8%
4. Motorola	25.4	8.5%	37.2	12.8%	-31.7%
5. LG Electronics	23	7.7%	21.9	7.6%	5%
Others	55.3	18.5%	50.3	17.4%	9.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>289.6</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>

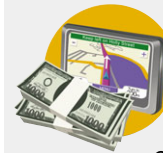
## tidbits

Recent results from the monthly Consumer Spending



Indicator study show that consumers responding to the survey are most likely (57%) to cut back on dining out and least likely (35%) to cut back on video games.

Source: NPD Group



GPS maker Garmin sold 3.9 million units in the third quarter of 2008, up 43% from Q3 2007.

Source: Garmin

iSuppli is forecasting that HDTV unit shipments will reach 241.2 million by 2012.



Source: iSuppli



Despite the economic downturn, a new study from the CEA pro-

jected a 3.5% growth in consumer electronics industry shipments for Q4 2008 compared to the same period last year.

Source: CEA (Consumer Electronics Association)

In 2009, 58% of U.S. car models will come with iPod support straight from the factory.



Source: iSuppli

# HD Like You've Never Seen Before

## LG's 52LG70 1080p LCD TV & BD300 Network Blu-ray Disc Player

**T**he new year has arrived, and even non-football diehards know that means Super Bowl Sunday is right around the corner. Short of snagging 50-yard line seats at Tampa's Raymond James Stadium, the best way to view the National Football League's crown jewel is on an HDTV. Enter LG's own gem, the 52-inch 52LG70 Flat Panel (\$2,799.95; [www.lgusa.com](http://www.lgusa.com)), a distinguished member of LG's LG70 HDTV Series roster. Long after a Super Bowl winner is crowned Feb. 1, though, LG can help you and your family revel in a heightened home-theater experience by adding the trailblazing BD300, the world's first BD (Blu-ray Disc) and DVD player that can access the Netflix instant streaming library of more than 12,000 titles. Combined, the 52LG70 and BD300 are a sports and movie lover's dream come true.

### Time For Kickoff

Available in 32-, 42-, 47-, and 52-inch models, LG70 Flat Panel LCD HDTV Series TVs pack full HD 1080p (1,920 x 1,080) resolution support. So, as you and your buddies gather around the 52LG70 on Super Bowl Sunday, you'll witness every snap, handoff, pass, and touchdown as if standing on the sidelines. LG's cutting-edge Intelligent Sensor technology uses a sophisticated

4,096 sensing process to adjust brightness, contrast, color, sharpness, and white balance. This enables the 52LG70 to produce an image automatically adjusted to match a room's lighting environment. The result is more engaging and realistic game action, as well as a potential reduction in power consumption.

With LG's TruMotion 120Hz technology, even a running back streaking down the sideline toward the end zone will flow smoothly and naturally. And thanks to LG's Clear Voice technology, which automatically enhances and bolsters audio frequencies emitting from human voices, you'll hear the play-by-play given by the game's commentators in crisp, clear, high-quality dialogue unimpaired, not muffled, or drowned out by the crowd cheering madly in the background.

After the last second has ticked off the clock, you can round up the kids and family and count on LG's 24p Real Cinema technology to watch your favorite HD content at 24fps (frames per second), matching the rate at which HD films are shot. LG's SimpLink system, meanwhile, makes connecting other SimpLink-compatible gear, such as the BD300 or an LG home-theater system, to one of the 52LG70's four HDMI V.13

with Deep Color inputs a cinch, while giving you control of all the SimpLink-connected devices with one remote. Further expansion comes by way of the 52LG70's integrated USB 2.0 port, making viewing JPEG digital photos on a USB flash drive or playing MP3 digital audio files on a DAP a simple reality.

### Looks To Die For

Featuring a teardrop design and high-gloss black frame accented in seductive shades of red, the 52LG70 surrounds its 52-inch diagonal screen with tasteful sophistication while discreetly hiding an invisible two-way, four-system speaker that stretches around the entire bezel. In addition to an onboard Dolby Digital Decoder, the 52LG70's use of speaker actuators vs. traditional speaker drivers allows for a more modern, streamlined design that does away with often-unsightly speaker grilles while still producing SRS TruSurround XT sound. All features combined, the ISFccc (Image Science Foundation custom calibration certification)-ready 52LG70 will catch any viewer's eye, whether playing Super Bowl turf battles or Friday night flicks.

### Now Playing: The BD300

Does instant access to 12,000 movies and TV episodes sound enticing? Then



LG's 52LG70 1080p LCD TV & BD300 Network Blu-ray Disc Player \$2,799.95 and \$349.99, respectively [www.lgusa.com](http://www.lgusa.com)

meet the network-enabled, multidimensional, trailblazing LG BD300 (\$349.99; [www.lgusa.com](http://www.lgusa.com))—your bridge to unlimited action, horror, drama, romantic, and comedic viewing. With a subscription from leading online movie provider Netflix (as low as \$8.99 a month; [www.netflix.com](http://www.netflix.com)) and a broadband Internet connection, the BD300 can instantly stream movies and TV episodes to your HDTV from Netflix's Watch Instantly library in audio and video quality approaching that of DVD. After you press play, the BD300 and Netflix won't bother you with advertising or trailers. Instead, movies start in less than 30 seconds, after which you can pause, rewind, and fast-forward the action repeatedly thanks to unlimited viewing freedom. With the BD300 as your ticket, you can also dig deep into Netflix's smaller library of classic movies and TV episodes, as well as a selection of recent releases.

### Hardly A One-Trick Pony

For those times when only an action adventure or thriller from your own BD library will satisfy, the BD300 is more than up to the task. In addition to superior picture quality by way of full HD 1080p support, the BD300's all-digital HDMI output and onboard lossless Dolby TrueHD/Digital Plus and DTS-HD Advanced Digital Out support means a superior audio experience in up to 7.1-channel speaker bliss. Chances are your movie library also contains a healthy supply of older, standard-definition DVDs. No problem with the BD300, which can upscale those titles to 1080p HD quality.

Combined with a broadband Internet connection plugged into the BD300's Ethernet port, the player puts BD-Live support at your fingertips, giving you scads of Web-based material, including trailers, ringtones, interactive content, and exclusive extras that movie studios

are increasingly providing. Further, support for Bonus View puts picture-in-picture commentary and special features within your reach.

### Input On The Outputs

The BD300's Ethernet and HDMI outputs provide seemingly limitless opportunity to dive into mouthwatering BD extras and superior playback quality, but this talented player offers plenty of additional connectivity options, including optical digital and coaxial audio outputs, Composite and Component video outputs, and stereo audio outputs. All this comes in a smartly crafted frame that measures just 2.3x16.9x10.9 inches (HxWxD) and glows with a glossy-black richness to match conceivably any setting. Throw in an included universal remote, and you're one press of the Play button away from thousands of Netflix movies, high-def BD glory, and hours of Internet-enabled BD extras. **FC**

# The Magic Box

## Understanding DACs (Digital-To-Analog Converters)



**I**magine if the government passed a new law mandating that as of Feb. 17, all U.S. citizens must abandon English as their official language and instead speak, write, and read Mandarin Chinese. That, in a nutshell, is the situation that older televisions across the country face. As of that date, television stations must abandon broadcasting analog signals that older televisions natively handle and exclusively use digital signals that make as much sense to older televisions as Mandarin Chinese does to most Americans.

In order for older analog televisions to make sense of the new digital signals, they

need hardware called a DAC (digital-to-analog converter) to translate. Converter boxes with DACs equipped receive incoming digital signals, which contain data consisting entirely of ones and zeros. The DAC itself is a special chip within the converter box that uses a processor coupled with an internal program to translate all of those ones and zeros into analog video and audio waves. The resulting analog signal is then passed out of the converter box to a connected television, which has no idea the analog data it is now receiving was once stored in digital format.

Converter boxes with DACs are nice for those with older TVs (see sidebar), but don't use them with all-digital televisions, or you will reduce the sound and picture

quality of incoming broadcast signals. In this setup, the television must use an internal ADC (analog-to-digital converter) to translate the analog signal back into a digital format, so the converter box introduces an unnecessary step that inevitably degrades the original signal.

The good news is that if you need a DAC, the government has you covered—at least up to \$40. Every household in America is eligible for two free coupons worth up to \$40 each off the price of converter boxes, meaning your out-of-pocket cost is minimal (and possibly nothing, depending on what box you purchase). You can learn more and sign up for your coupon at the DTV 2009 Web site located at [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov). **FG**

BY TRACY BAKER

### Do You Need A DAC?

**I**f you've purchased a television—HD or otherwise—in the past two years, there's little chance you need a converter box with a DAC. Check the documentation that came with your television to determine what type of tuner it has (digital or analog). If it has a digital tuner, you don't need a converter box with a DAC. If it has an analog tuner, you need a converter box with a DAC to receive over-the-air signals from local broadcasters. If you get TV service through a cable or satellite television operator, contact the provider to see if you need any special equipment to still receive service after the transition. ●

# Going Digital

## How Will The Upcoming TV Conversion Affect You?



HOME THEATER

**B**eginning on Feb. 17, television broadcasters across the nation will begin sending out their programming via DTV (digital TV) signals.

### Why Digital?

Analog broadcasts have worked well for a long time, so many wonder why we have to make the switch at all, let alone next year. There are a variety of reasons to go digital, but the primary one is to conserve what has quickly become one of our most precious natural resources: radio spectrum. There's a fixed amount of spectrum, meaning there are only so many frequencies available to handle television, radio, cell phone, networking, emergency, and other wireless traffic.

Analog and digital transmissions eat up the same amount of bandwidth, but there's a big difference between the two technologies. Digital transmissions can have compression and other techniques applied that are off-limits to analog transmissions. These tricks let broadcasters

squeeze several digital channels into the same amount of bandwidth that one analog channel requires. This is important where HDTV broadcasts are concerned because HDTV transmissions require more bandwidth than standard-definition channels. We have no way to increase available radio spectrum, so we must decrease the amount of spectrum each channel requires. Digital is vital today, where hundreds of channels must coexist.

### What About Analog?

An analog TV can't use a digital signal. A DAC (digital-to-analog converter) must receive the incoming digital signal, convert it to analog, and output the signal to your analog TV. If you have an analog TV and subscribe to cable or satellite (digital or otherwise), you already have the hardware that incorporates a DAC—so few of us will notice the difference once the content switches to all digital.

If you're using an antenna to pull in free OTA (over-the-air) broadcasts, you may have a problem. Right now, broadcasters transmit digital and analog OTA signals simultaneously, but on Feb. 17, the analog

transmissions will stop. If your TV has an analog tuner, you'll need a DAC box to convert the digital signal. If your TV has a digital tuner, however, you'll be able to enjoy OTA broadcasts. Check out the "Are You Ready For DTV?" sidebar for a convenient breakdown.

If your TV was manufactured after March 1, 2007, it has to have a digital tuner. Otherwise, check the manual or call the manufacturer to see what type of tuner is installed. Keep in mind that even if you have a digital HDTV, it may still have an analog tuner, as crazy as that sounds.

DACs are available in preparation for the switch, but they're not free; the NTIA (National Telecommunications & Information Administration) is subsidizing the cost. The most important thing to keep in mind before the transition is that there's no need to panic. Your old TVs won't become worthless, and new TVs will be ready to go once the digital switch is thrown, without the need to buy any additional hardware, cables, or other accessories. **FG**

BY TRACY BAKER

## Are You Ready For DTV?

Most of us are already prepared to usher in the age of all-digital television, but refer to this chart for each television you have in the house to see what type of hardware you need come Feb. 17.

What Tuner Type Does Your TV Have?	How Do You Receive Your TV Signal?	What You Need For The DTV Transition:
An analog tuner	Over-the-air	A DAC (digital-to-analog converter) box
An analog tuner	Via cable or satellite service	Your existing cable or satellite equipment
A digital tuner	Over-the-air, cable, or satellite service	Nothing extra at all

# More Power To You

## A/V Receiver Specs & Volume



When choosing a stereo or home-theater receiver, one specification likely to influence your decision is how much power it generates. Naturally, you want a unit that will pump out enough clear volume to keep you happy.

On the surface, the equation seems straightforward: The higher the watts-per-channel rating, the more volume the receiver will deliver. Right?

Not necessarily. Under the surface, things get more complicated.

### All Wattage Specs Are Not Created Equal

Surprisingly, perhaps, power specs are almost useless for comparing receivers. By using complex number-crunching, some manufacturers claim wattage in excess of what a unit is capable of delivering. That makes it just as crucial to test out a receiver as it is a TV before purchasing it.

Then again, wattage alone may not be as important as you think. It would take a tenfold increase in power to give a unit

double the volume. That's why 100 watts won't sound twice as loud as 50 watts; you'd need 500 watts for that.

### Speaker Specs Matter, Too

A receiver's power is only half of the mix. Two speaker specifications will tell you how well it utilizes that power.

**Sensitivity.** This indicates how efficiently the speaker converts power into sound. It's measured in decibels and ranges from

around 85dB (very low efficiency) to 105dB (very high efficiency). The more sensitive the speaker is, the easier it is for the receiver to drive it. A 3dB increase in sensitivity is equivalent to doubling your receiver's power. With low-powered receivers of less than 50 watts per channel, speaker sensitivity can be a significant factor in getting adequate volume.

**Impedance.** This refers to the electrical resistance against the receiver's output. Here you'll likely find one of two possibilities: 4 ohms or 8 ohms. Note that it's important to match this to the receiver's impedance. An 8-ohm speaker is easier to drive; a 4-ohm speaker draws roughly twice the current, thus a low-power receiver may struggle to keep up.

## How Much Is Enough?

How much power will it take to fill your room with sound? Here's a loose guide to give you a starting point. And remember: The bigger the space, the more important it becomes to use speakers with medium to high sensitivity.

Room Size In Square Feet	Watts Per Channel
Small (smaller than 200)	Up to 100W
Medium (200 to 300)	100 to 150W
Large (300 and larger)	150 to 200W

If your volume doesn't hit you where you live, a quick spec check can tell you what may be lacking. **fg**

BY BRIAN HODGE



# Cut Down On The Clutter

## Wireless Speakers Simplify Your Home-Theater System



Wireless is the wave of, well, of now. Because wireless technology is eliminating the need for speaker wires, it's important to

understand how you can optimize your home theater with these cordless components. The fewer cords you have to plug in and organize (or untangle), the more you can enjoy the true experience of your speaker system: surround audio bliss.

### Technology Translation

To break down some terminology, wireless speakers convert electrical signals into sound through two primary transmissions: RF (radio frequency) and IF (infrared frequency). RF transmission is more commonly used because the signal can travel clearly through walls and other obstructions (most of the time). A wireless transmitter detects

signals from the audio source and streams them to the receivers located within the wireless speakers. For example, the Mint 220 Digital Music Station (\$134.99; [www.mintds.com](http://www.mintds.com)) uses a USB audio transmitter to wirelessly send audio to the speaker system.

### Great Audio Expectations

A wireless speaker system has undeniably convenient capabilities that a standard system may not be able to offer. You have the option to place it anywhere in an entertainment room, or you can expand your idea of "surround sound" to your living room, kitchen, bedroom, and garden (if you go for a set of outdoor wireless speakers).

Transmitters can project a signal anywhere between 50 and 300 feet, providing flexible organizational options. Be sure to remember that the distance between the media source and the speakers can't

exceed the manufacturer's recommended range; otherwise, they will receive a weak signal or no signal at all.

One of the best reasons to invest in wireless speakers is the multifunctionality that accompanies unwired technology. You can use wireless speakers to project sound originating from your MP3 player or computer. Obviously, wireless speakers are ideal for a home-theater room because you have the option to position them in the best locations inside the room without hiding awkwardly long cables.

### Way To Go Wireless

There are numerous components that will complete your home theater. In light of this, why would you go back to the confusing jumble of wires, cables, and cords when you can pick up a wireless speaker and place it almost anywhere you like? **FG**

BY JOANNA SAFFORD



## Stop Interfering, Please

Even though wireless technology has progressed considerably from what it once was, there remain some obstacles that can disrupt a radio-frequency transmission. When an appliance or electronic device operating on the same wireless frequency as the speakers disturbs the broadcasting range of the wireless speakers, interference can occur. For instance, interfering signals can come from

microwave ovens, cellular phones, and/or Bluetooth-enabled devices.

Many times you can correct this issue by simply moving the source of interference more than 10 feet away from your speakers. Or you can reposition your wireless speakers as necessary. If you're still experiencing audio interference, you may need to turn other electronics off completely. ●

# Home-Theater Shopping Questionnaire

## Find The Right Budget & HDTV To Fit Your Needs

To figure out where you should start your HDTV hunt, fill out the two questionnaire sections on this page. For more details about specific HDTV models and the features they offer, we suggest you speak with a CE retail associate.

### Part A

#### How Much Are You Willing To Spend?

**What is your overall home-theater budget?**

\$\_\_\_\_\_ (ex. \$4,166)

Break your previous answer into the percentages below. This 10%/30%/60% cost formula will show you how much you should budget for each piece of a home-theater setup.

10% High-quality cables and speaker wires = \$\_\_\_\_\_ (ex. \$416)

30% Audio system and disc player = \$\_\_\_\_\_ (ex. \$1,250)

60% HDTV and setup costs = \$\_\_\_\_\_ (ex. \$2,500)

#### What Is Your HDTV Type?

**Which HDTV best fits your situation?**

- a. A thin-profile TV that I can mount on my wall. The screen size doesn't matter, and I want plenty of options to choose from. The TV's viewing angle won't be an issue, and it needs to be able to function in a room where I have little control over natural light.
- b. A wall-mountable TV that is as little as 3 inches thick and 50 inches or larger. It should have a wide viewing angle for when my friends and family get together to watch the big game. I also want the TV to offer realistic color and a high contrast ratio, without it suffering from motion blur.
- c. I want an HDTV that isn't going to cost me an arm and a leg. It should have a large screen (50 inches or larger). It can take up plenty of space in my home, and I don't want to bother with installing a wall mount.

**How much power do you want your TV to use?**

- a. An HDTV that has average to good power consumption.
- b. The TV's power consumption isn't an issue.

**How much maintenance/money are you willing to put into your new HDTV investment?**

- a. I don't want to replace or purchase anything after my home theater is set up.
- b. Replacing parts that may cost \$200 or more in a few years doesn't bother me.

**How quickly do you expect your HDTV to be ready for your viewing pleasure?**

- a. It should be ready as soon as I press the Power button.
- b. I can wait 20 seconds or so for the TV to warm up.

#### Answers For Part B

Total up the results for each question that you answered and find your HDTV type below. Questions that you answered with the letter *a* are 1 point, *b* are two points, and *c* are 3 points.

**Less than 6 points.** As far as HDTVs are concerned, an LCD is right up your alley. To produce the same picture brightness, LCDs use less power than plasmas, and they generally have a higher native resolution than what same-sized plasma TVs offer.

**6 to 7 points.** Look no further than a plasma TV in your HDTV search. These TVs boast the best in picture quality, as well as long life spans. Some plasma manufacturers claim their TVs can last more than 20 years with eight hours of use per day.

**More than 7 points.** For the budget-conscious among us, RPTVs (rear-projection TVs) are a perfect match. This type of screen may take up more space than its HDTV counterparts, but you'll be able to keep your overall home-theater budget lower. This TV is sure to be the center of attention in any room.

# Yes, You Need To Calibrate

## Give Your HDTV A Makeover

**I**t's probably for the best that we consumers don't have access to the settings that will make our HDTVs look their best. Sure, you can use a calibration disc, but chances are good that the TV's menu controls won't let you do everything those discs suggest you do. The advanced stuff requires a trip to the HDTV's service menu, which is accessed by punching a secret code into your remote control. We don't advise that you do so, however, because you can ruin your TV.

The HDTV manufacturers keep the code a secret for a reason: Poking around in the wrong places can have devastating consequences. "Consumers should never go into the service menu," says Ira George, an ISF-certified Elite Services Specialist for Geek Squad ([www.geek.squad.com](http://www.geek.squad.com)) in Omaha, Neb. "If they don't know what they're doing, they will render the TV useless."

Indeed, one ISF-certified calibrator we spoke with years ago during a calibration session told us the sad tale of a customer who entered the service menu

and accidentally turned off the electron guns used to display an image on the screen. He couldn't see anything—including the service menu—and his television was essentially broken until the ISF calibrator arrived to save the day.

As if going into the service menu isn't perilous enough, there's not much the average consumer can do once they get there. You need pricey equipment to adjust the settings found there—exactly the kind of equipment ISF-certified calibrators have. "We use calibration equipment provided by Sencore," says George. "It is a color analyzer that is used to set the white balance of the customers' displays. Without that equipment, customers cannot accurately set the colors of their televisions."

There are only a few downsides to calibration. The first is that it can't be done right out of the box. "It is recommended that the TV have at least 100 hours of use before a calibration can be performed properly," says George. There also are a few things calibration can't overcome. "Calibration cannot correct alignment issues in rear-projection TVs," George says. "Calibration also cannot correct any service issues with the TV."

Although you can expect to budget 10 to 15% of the purchase price of your TV for a professional calibration session, consider it an entertainment investment that will pay dividends for years to come. **FG**

BY TRACY BAKER

## What To Expect From A Calibration

**I**f you decide to call in Geek Squad's Home Theater Calibration team to calibrate your HDTV, you can expect the Agents to establish maximum contrast between black and white, so images

look their best and retain maximum detail. The ISF-certified Elite Service Specialist will also use color analyzer equipment to objectively tune color saturation and temperature as precisely as possible,

letting you see video exactly the same way that the person creating it did.

A calibration session includes two inputs on the set, so if you have a DVD player and cable box, for example, the HDTV's inputs will be calibrated specifically for the video output from those two devices. Calibration also adjusts the sound levels and positioning of the speakers in a surround-sound setup, so your entire home theater will look and sound as good as it can. ●



# Hang It Up

## Get The Right Flat-Panel Mount For Your HDTV

**T**here's no denying that mounting LCDs and plasma flat-panel displays on a wall is best from both an aesthetic and practical standpoint. Setting it up this way shows off just how thin the panel really is, makes it easier to achieve the recommended viewing distance, and just looks cool.

Best Buy offers three different categories of wall mounts for flat-panel displays: low-profile, tilting, and full-motion.

Low-profile mounts keep the set as flush to the wall as possible but offer limited or no ability to tilt the HDTV. These work well in rooms where you can control ambient lighting so that glare doesn't interfere with the picture.

Tilting models mount the set on a hinge to let you tilt it up or down a bit, and full-motion mounts let you pull the set out from the wall, tilt it up or down, and rotate it left or right. These are excellent options when the set is located in a room where glare is a problem or in a room

where people will tend to watch the television in bed or while sitting on the floor so the set can be pointed at an angle that makes viewing it more comfortable. Full-motion mounts are also ideal for mounting an HDTV in a corner because their arms can extend to give the TV clearance from each wall while still letting it retain its ability to tilt up and down.

Some of the most advanced mounts, such as the Sanus LA112-B1 (\$899.99; [www.sanus.com](http://www.sanus.com)), are motorized to offer the best of all worlds. The LA112-B1 comes with a remote control that lets you tilt, swivel, and extend the mount without even leaving the couch.

### Geek Squad Flat-Panel Mounting Services

Service	Price	Notes
HDTV Mounting Services*	\$99.99 \$199.99 \$399.99	For HDTVs up to 32 inches For HDTVs 33 to 60 inches For HDTVs 61 inches and larger
TV Wire Conceal Service	\$49.99	Service does not include the concealment of AC power cords

### Bundled Services That Include Flat-Panel Mounting

Advance Home Theater Setup & Mount	\$449.99	Service Includes: TV & Video Setup, TV Mounting 33 to 60 inches, TV Wire Conceal, Speaker Setup
Premium Home Theater Setup & Mount	\$799.99	Service Includes: TV & Video Setup, TV Mounting 33 to 60 inches, TV Wire Conceal, Speaker Setup, Speaker Mounting

\* All TV Mounting Services must be purchased with a Setup service (TV & Video Setup \$99.99 or Standard Home Theater Setup \$199.99).

### Leave It To The Pros

Mounts can be tricky to install, particularly if you have a large, heavy flat-panel display, so you can let Geek Squad take all of the guesswork out of it by opting for one of its Home Theater Setup & Mounting packages. (See the "Geek Squad Flat-Panel Mounting Services" sidebar for more information.) Geek Squad Agents can even conceal all the wires in the wall behind the set, providing that truly professional look that can elevate your HDTV from the realm of electronics into the realm of art. **FG**

BY TRACY BAKER

# HDTVs

## The Goods On LCDs, Plasmas & RPTVs

### LCD

#### Pros

- The thin profiles and light weight of these televisions make them easy to mount on a wall.
- Power demands are a bit lower than comparably sized plasma displays and considerably lower than CRT televisions.
- Many LCD TVs have a VGA input, so you can hook up your computer and view content on a big, bright screen.
- Altitude and air pressure have no effect on LCD TVs, so performance doesn't suffer in the mountains.
- Image burn-in is unlikely.

#### Cons

- Fast-moving images may suffer from a slight trailer-effect, but as LCD technology has improved, the effect has become barely perceptible.
- When pixels stick on or off, they show up as either a pinpoint of bright light or black and can be distracting on-screen.

#### Best For

- Bright, sunny kitchens
- Small rooms

### Plasma

#### Pros

- Plasma TVs light phosphors evenly across the screen to create images, and the images are consistently bright and clear with vibrant colors.
- The contrast ratio is high (30,000:1), so you'll see deep, dark blacks and bright, crisp whites.
- The design and technology of plasma TVs lend themselves to large screen sizes—typically 50 inches or greater.
- Rapid pixel response means no blurry motion.
- Wide viewing angles give you the same high-quality images on-screen no matter where in the room you happen to be sitting.

#### Cons

- Although the risk has been greatly reduced through advances in flat-screen technology, some plasma TVs are still susceptible to image burn-in if not cared for properly.
- A combination of low air pressure and high altitudes (6,500 feet and higher) may cause plasma TVs to buzz.

#### Best For

- Movies with nonstop action
- Sporting events

### RPTV

#### Pros

- RPTVs (rear-projection TVs) are surprisingly lightweight for their sizes.
- You'll find exceptional picture quality on very big screens (65 inches and larger).
- As screens get bigger, RPTVs tend to be more cost-effective than LCD or plasma TVs.

#### Cons

- With depths of 16 to 24 inches, these TVs are far too big and bulky to mount on a wall.
- RPTVs still require that lamps, which may cost a few hundred dollars, be replaced every few years.

#### Best For

- Big, roomy home theaters
- Movies and games



# Essential THINGS TO KNOW

## TV Screen Technologies

### LCD

**Q** What's an LCD (liquid-crystal display)?

**A** An LCD HDTV is similar to a computer monitor. Light shines through a layer of liquid-crystal gel and tiny color apertures. The gel blocks light to make dark colors.

**Q** What are some advantages of an LCD?

**A** LCDs offer full HD (1080p) resolution for less money and in smaller screen sizes than other HDTVs. They usually draw less power than plasma and emit less heat.

**Q** What are the disadvantages of an LCD?

**A** LCD picture quality varies from so-so to excellent. Cheaper sets exhibit motion blur and can vary in color and brightness when you're not sitting directly in front of them.

**Q** Which image quality features should I look for?

**A** Antijudder technologies can combat motion blur. Meanwhile, LED backlighting ups brightness and contrast.

### Plasma

**Q** What's a plasma display?

**A** A plasma HDTV contains up to 2 million pixels made of tiny capsules of xenon and neon gas. The tinted capsules glow to make vibrant, rich video.

**Q** What are some advantages of plasma?

**A** In a dark room, black parts of a plasma's picture look truly black (high contrast ratio). Motion looks smooth, and the picture looks similar from any practical viewing angle.

**Q** Are there any disadvantages?

**A** Most plasmas consume more energy than other types of HDTVs, and they produce more heat. Also, Full HD plasmas start around 40 or 42 inches, unlike LCD (32 inches).

**Q** Are there any myths surrounding plasma TVs?

**A** Most early plasma problems have been corrected, such as burn-in (screen discoloration) from static objects.



## RPTVs

**Q** What screen sizes do RPTVs (rear-projection TVs) come in?

**A** RPTVs are available from 50 to 73 inches and larger, but they are also significantly bulkier than flat-panel TVs. RPTVs are the best value at sizes larger than 50 inches.

**Q** Do RPTVs last as long as other TV types?

**A** RPTVs feature an internal bulb that can burn out after as few as 3,000 hours, but owners can have it replaced.

**Q** Do RPTVs have screen uniformity issues?

**A** Some users notice that RPTVs suffer from distorted geometry, blurriness, and a slightly dimmer image at the edges and corners of the screen compared to the middle.

**Q** How do DLP (Digital Light Processing)-based RPTVs work?

**A** DLP rear-projection TVs use one or more microchips that contain up to 2 million hinge-mounted microscopic mirrors that reflect a digital image onto the screen.

**Q** Do rear-projection DLP TVs look better up close than flat panel TVs?

**A** DLP TVs feature a high fill factor, which means that adjacent pixels don't appear to have a border between them.

**Q** Are RPTVs generally heavy?

**A** Despite their size, rear-projection TVs are generally lighter than comparably sized LCD and plasma displays.

## OLED

**Q** What does OLED (organic light-emitting diode) mean?

**A** OLED involves organic materials that emit their own light. Although OLED-based televisions are still rare, OLED is used more widely on small screens, such as those on the outside of flip-top cell phones.

**Q** What are some advantages of OLED-based TV screens?

**A** Screens are very thin, power consumption is lower than LCD and plasma sets, and OLEDs can handle quick-moving images very well while producing excellent color reproduction and brightness.

**Q** What are some disadvantages of OLED-based TV screens?

**A** Currently, OLED-based TVs are small yet very expensive. Sony's XEL-1, for example, has just an 11-inch screen but costs nearly \$2,500. OLED TVs also have shorter expected life spans than LCDs and plasmas.

**Q** Why aren't OLED-based TVs available in larger numbers?

**A** Because OLED technologies are essentially still in the developing stages, manufacturing OLED TVs in large numbers is incredibly expensive and difficult, making a manufacturer's return on investment a risky reality.

**Q** When will OLED-based TVs be readily available?

**A** According to predictions from industry experts, it may be five years or longer before OLED-based TVs are available in even modest numbers.





## LCD TV

## Immerse Yourself In Big Picture &amp; Sound

Mitsubishi 149 Series  
LCD Flat-Panel HDTVs  
(LT-46149/LT-52149)MSRP: 46-inch model \$2,999  
SKU: 8961368MSRP: 52-inch model \$3,399  
SKU: 8961634[www.mitsubishi-tv.com](http://www.mitsubishi-tv.com)

## Quick Overview

The Mitsubishi 149 Series flat-panel TVs with immersive sound provide a simple, space-saving solution for built-in surround sound in your home-theater setup. Without clutter, such as extra cables or speakers\*, these TVs feature an UltraThin Frame™, which will give you more picture and sound without taking up precious space.

## Perfect For

The 149 Series is ideal for home-theater enthusiasts with limited space who are looking for an immersive home-theater experience with a single, stylish, sophisticated unit.\*

## Outstanding Benefits

- **1080p LCD flat-panel display** with Tru1080p™ and Plush1080p® Processing
- **Integrated sound projector** for true-to-life 5.1 surround sound\*
- **Exclusive 6-Color Processor™** produces bright colors and whiter whites
- **Smooth 120Hz™** minimizes blur
- **Deep Color and x.v.Color™** enables more color than ever before
- **Four SimplayHD-certified HDMI 1.3a inputs**
- **NetCommand®** provides a true one-remote control home-theater system
- **USB input** enables you to easily connect USB devices
- **Digital cable-ready CableCARD slot** allows quick and easy cable setup

## Coolest Feature

The 16-Speaker **Integrated Sound Projector** with variable subwoofer preout gives you true-to-life 5.1 surround sound without bulky receivers or additional speakers.\*

\* Adding a powered subwoofer to the TV is recommended for the best sound.

**HITACHI**  
 Inspire the Next

## LCD TV

# The Thinnest Large Screen HDTV Monitor Available

HOME THEATER



### Director's Series® UltraThin 1.5

**MSRP: \$3,199.95**

SKU: 9018644

[www.hitachi.us/tv](http://www.hitachi.us/tv)

### Quick Overview

The Hitachi Director's Series® UltraThin 1.5 model UT47X902 is the thinnest large screen HDTV monitor available at a mere 1.5 inches thin. A high-precision Black Sapphire Crystal Frame surrounds the image and is beveled to present the picture like a work of art. This HDTV includes In-Plane Switching LCD technology for the widest viewing angles and color purity as well as an industry leading PictureMaster™ video processor for the most realistic picture possible.

### Perfect For

The décor-conscious, the aficionado, the connoisseur, and the stylish.

### Outstanding Benefits

- 1.5-inch Thin Crystal Frame
- Stunning 360° Design
- Full HD 1080p
- 120Hz with Motion Interpolation
- UltraWide 178° Viewing Angle
- Fanless Energy Efficient Design

### Coollest Feature

**The UltraThin 1.5 UT47X902 is a mere 1.5 inches thin, the thinnest large screen HDTV available on the consumer market today.** When combined with a commonly available ultra-thin wall mount of 0.4 inches, the total mounting depth of this 47-inch class (46.96 inches diagonally measured) HDTV monitor is an industry best. With a 1.9-inch total mounting depth, it is the realization of an installation inspired by style and design.



## LCD TV

# The Art Of Integration



LG LG40 Series 720p  
Flat-Panel LCD  
HDTV/DVD Combo  
(26LG40/32LG40)

MSRP: 26-inch class  
(26" diagonal) \$899.99  
SKU: 8939679

MSRP: 32-inch class  
(31.5" diagonal) \$999.99  
SKU: 8878869

[www.LGusa.com](http://www.LGusa.com)

### Quick Overview

Designed to accommodate contemporary lifestyles, the LG40 Series LCD HDTV line from LG provides viewers with an intuitive, stylish, and advanced HDTV. With 720p HD resolution, invisible speaker system, and an internal DVD player, the LG40 Series allows users to maximize their space without compromising high performance—and the great home-theater experience that comes with it.

### Perfect For

Those with limited space who want a high-definition picture, quality sound, and a DVD player.

### Outstanding Benefits

- 720p HD resolution for stunning image clarity
- Dynamic Contrast Ratio: 26-inch class is 5,000:1; 32-inch class is 12,000:1
- Side-loading progressive scan DVD player
- 3x HDMI™ V.1.3 with Deep Color
- A/V Mode (Cinema, Sports, Game)
- Invisible speaker system with Clear Voice technology
- LG SimpLink™ Connectivity
- USB 2.0 input for viewing JPEG photos or listening to MP3 files
- RGB 15-pin computer input enables use as a computer monitor
- Expert mode for detailed calibrations

### Coollest Feature

The Super Multi-Format **built-in progressive scan DVD player** upconverts DVDs to 720p resolution and plays back most recordable disc-based media.



# DLP® TV

## Diamond—A History Of Distinction



HOME THEATER

Mitsubishi Diamond  
835 Series SuperSlim  
1080p DLP® HDTVs  
(WD-65835/WD-73835)

MSRP: 65-inch model \$2,999  
SKU: 8886896

MSRP: 73-inch model \$4,299  
SKU: 8886912

[www.mitsubishi-tv.com](http://www.mitsubishi-tv.com)

### Quick Overview

Mitsubishi's Diamond models have come to represent the company's devotion to timeless design, commitment to quality, and the pursuit of innovation while never losing sight of what is most important to the customer. This proud tradition is evident in its large-screen DLP® HDTVs. The result is an all-picture sensation that puts you in the middle of all the action.

### Perfect For

With 1080p, a compact cabinet, and simple design, Mitsubishi's Diamond DLP® HDTVs are perfect for those who want a large screen that won't take up a lot of space.

### Outstanding Benefits

- **1080p DLP® display** with Tru1080p™ and Plush1080p® Processing
- **Exclusive 6-Color Processor™** generates a brighter and wider range of colors and creates whiter whites
- **Smooth 120Hz™** minimizes motion blur
- **x.v.Color™**, a new standard for HDTV, enables more color than ever before
- **Color 4D Video Noise Reduction, PerfectColor™, and PerfectTint™** allow for additional advanced color processing and adjustment
- **Dark Detailer™** for optimal viewing of dark, dramatic scenes
- **SharpEdge™** creates crisp, sharp edges for stunning picture precision
- **NetCommand®** provides a true one-remote control home-theater system

### Coollest Feature

Once 3D video content becomes readily available, these **3D Ready** HDTVs will offer exciting HDTV experiences.

\* Diamond Step Up Feature

# Samsung's Series Of LCD HDTVs



**Wiselink Pro USB 2.0 InfoLink:** Samsung's 850 Series LCD offers a Wiselink Pro USB 2.0 InfoLink input. This port lets you listen to your digital music and view photos from a connected USB device. With the push of a button, the InfoLink feature lets you receive real-time news content from *USA Today*, as well as weather, sports, and stock information.

		330/331 Series	450/451 Series	530 Series	550 Series	580 Series	
	<b>What It Means</b>						
Sizes Available	Diagonal screen measurement	330 in 19", 22", 26", 32", 27", 40"; 331 in 19"	450 in 19", 22", 26", 32", 37", 40"; 451 in 19"	40", 46", 52"	32", 37", 40", 46", 52"	46", 52"	
HD Resolution	The fixed TV resolution	720p	720p	1080p	1080p	1080p	
Dynamic Contrast Ratio	A ratio of the brightest whites to the darkest blacks	8,000:1 (26" is 5,000:1; 19" and 22" are 3,000:1)	10,000:1 (26" is 5,000:1; 22" is 3,000:1)	20,000:1	30,000:1 (32" and 37" are 15,000:1)	30,000:1	
Response Time	How quickly the LCD delivers images	32" and up are 6ms; 19" are 8ms	32" and up are 6ms; 19" are 8ms	5ms	5ms	4ms	
HDMI Inputs	Digital source connections	2	3	3	5	3	
Touch Of Color (ToC)	A decorative border that enhances the LCD's look	None	None	None	None	None	
Auto Motion Plus 120Hz	Technology that creates a video frame between two frames, thereby reducing motion blur	None	None	None	None	Included	
Wiselink Or Wiselink Pro USB 2.0 InfoLink	Lets you enjoy your music and photos; InfoLink feature gives access to current news and more	None	None	Included	Included	Included	
Anynet + HDMI-CEC	Allows your HT devices to communicate with each other	None	Included	Included	Included	Included	
Wide Color Enhancer	LCD adjusts color to reflect natural tones	None	Included	Included	Included	Included	
Content Library	Preloaded flash content such as games, art, and more	None	None	None	None	None	
Entertainment Mode	Modes that adjust your video and sound settings	Games, Movies, and Standard modes included	Games, Movies, and Standard modes included	Games, Movies, and Standard modes included	Games, Movies, and Standard modes included	Games, Movies, and Standard modes included	
ATSC/QAM Tuner	Tuners that allow you to receive digital or HD broadcasts	Both tuners included	Both tuners included	Both tuners included	Both tuners included	Both tuners included	

January's  
Featured Product

## 850 Series



	630 Series	650 Series	750 Series	850 Series	860 Series	950 Series
						
	52"	19", 32", 40", 46", 52"	40", 46", 52"	46", 52" (both have a slender 1.9-inch cabinet)	46", 52" (both have a slender 1.9-inch cabinet)	46", 55"
	1080p	1080p	1080p	1080p	1080p	1080p
	50,000:1	50,000:1 (32" is 15,000:1; 19" and 22" are 5,000:1)	50,000:1	50,000:1	50,000:1	1,000,000:1
	4ms	40" and up are 6ms; 32" is 5ms; 19" and 26" are 8ms	4ms	4ms	4ms	4ms
	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Reflects ambient light during day, appears nearly black at night	Reflects ambient light during day, appears nearly black at night	Reflects ambient light during day, appears nearly black at night	Reflects ambient light during day, appears nearly black at night	Has a blue ToC, appears black at night	Has a dark charcoal snakeskin ToC, appears black at night
	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
	None	None	Included	Included	Included	Included
	Games, Movies, and Standard modes included	Games, Movies, and Standard modes included	Games, Movies, and Standard modes included	Games, Movies, and Standard modes included	Games, Movies, and Standard modes included	Games, Movies, and Standard modes included
	Both tuners included	Both tuners included	Both tuners included	Both tuners included	Both tuners included	Both tuners included

## Which LCD TV Is Best For You?

So you've decided to get an LCD TV. The next step is deciding *which* LCD TV to invest in. With all the models on today's market, you want to be sure the model you select is the best for you and your family. Refer to this chart for further help when shopping.

		Size	Dimensions; Weight**	Native resolution	Viewing angle	Inputs	Outputs
	What It Means	The diagonal measurement of the TV's screen	Height x width x depth; How much the TV weighs	A fixed TV resolution; images are best displayed in the native resolution	The maximum angle at which the viewer can see the screen clearly	Inputs let you connect your components to your TV	Outputs transfer information from your TV to peripherals, such as audio to speakers
	<b>Westinghouse W3223</b> MSRP: \$599* SKU 8953153	32 inches	20.125x30.8x3.75 inches; 24.9 pounds	720p	N/A	2 HDMI; 1 Component; 1 S-Video; 1 Composite; 1 PC; 1 RF	2 audio
	<b>Insignia NS-LCD42HD-09</b> MSRP: \$949.99* SKU 8632802	42 inches	27x39.8x4.5 inches; 40.7 pounds	1080p	N/A	3 HDMI; 2 Component; 2 S-Video; 2 Composite; 1 PC; 1 RF	2 audio
	<b>Toshiba REGZA 42RV535U</b> MSRP: \$1,399.99* SKU 9034644	42 inches	25.5x39.8x3.7 inches; 46.3 pounds	1080p	N/A	4 HDMI; 2 Component; 1 S-Video; 1 PC	2 audio
	<b>Sharp AQUOS LC-52D85U</b> MSRP: \$2,299.99* SKU 9034243	52 inches	31.34x49.3x3.16 inches; 52.9 pounds	1080p	176 degrees	5 HDMI; 2 Component; 2 Composite; 1 S-Video; 1 PC	N/A
	<b>LG 52LG70</b> MSRP: \$2,799.95* SKU 8833747	52 inches	33.3x50.6x5.1 inches; 79.6 pounds	1080p	178 degrees	4 HDMI; 4 Component; 1 Composite; 1 RF; 1 PC; 1 S-Video	2 audio
	<b>Hitachi UT47X902</b> MSRP: \$3,199.95* SKU 9018644	47 inches	45.186x31.63x1.5 inches (with stand); N/A	1080p	178 degrees	1 HDMI; 1 Composite	1 audio
	<b>Mitsubishi LT-52149</b> MSRP: \$3,699* SKU 8961634	52 inches	31.5x47.7x4.8 inches; 83.8 pounds (with stand)	1080p	N/A	4 HDMI; 3 Component; 2 S-Video; 2 Composite	2 audio
	<b>Sony Bravia KDL-46XBR8</b> MSRP: \$4,999.99* SKU 8996508	46 inches	27x49.625x5.75 inches; 71.6 pounds	1080p	178 degrees	4 HDMI; 2 Component; 3 Composite; 1 S-Video; 1 RF; 1 PC	1 audio

\*Prices listed in this issue are for general reference and may vary from retailer pricing.

\*\*unless specified, this is without stand

## Which Plasma TV Is Best For You?

If you're planning on buying a plasma HDTV, it might be hard to decide on one just by looking at a wall of gorgeous sets. Refer to this chart for further help when shopping.

		Size	Dimensions; Weight**	Native resolution	Viewing angle	Inputs	Outputs
	What It Means	The diagonal measurement of the TV's screen	Height x width x depth; How much the TV weighs	A fixed TV resolution; images are best displayed in the native resolution	The maximum angle at which the viewer can see the screen clearly	Inputs let you connect your components to your TV	Outputs transfer information from your TV to peripherals, such as audio to speakers
	<b>Panasonic TH-42PX80U</b> MSRP: \$1,199.95* SKU 8722448	42 inches	26.7x40.2x3.7 inches; 56.7 pounds	720p	N/A	3 HDMI; 2 Component; 2 Composite; 2 S-Video	2 audio
	<b>Samsung PN42A450</b> MSRP: \$1,199.99* SKU 8749376	42 inches	26.3x41.5x3.8 inches; 59.1 pounds	720p	175 degrees	3 HDMI; 2 Component; 1 PC	N/A
	<b>Insignia NS-PDP50</b> MSRP: \$1,299.99* SKU 8454996	50 inches	32x51.4x4.2 inches; 95 pounds	720p	N/A	2 HDMI; 2 Component; 1 S-Video; 1 RF; 1 PC	1 audio
	<b>LG 50PG60</b> MSRP: \$2,499.98* SKU 8962045	50 inches	31.2x48.7x3.1 inches; 87.5 pounds	1080p	N/A	4 HDMI; 2 Component; 1 S-Video; 1 RF; 1 PC	3 audio
	<b>Hitachi P50X902</b> MSRP: \$3,199* SKU 9015692	50 inches	31.9x48.9x4.25 inches; N/A	1080p	N/A	3 HDMI; 2 Component; 1 S-Video; 1 RF	1 audio
	<b>Samsung PN63A760</b> MSRP: \$5,299.99* SKU 8960207	63 inches	37x60.38x11.5 inches; 185.2 pounds	1080p	175 degrees	4 HDMI; 2 Component; 1 Composite; 1 S-Video	1 audio
	<b>Panasonic TH-65PZ850U</b> MSRP: \$6,999.95* SKU 8939697	65 inches	39.1x63x4.3 inches; 160.9 pounds	1080p	N/A	4 HDMI; 2 Component; 2 Composite; 2 S-Video; 1 PC	2 audio
	<b>Pioneer PRO-141FD</b> MSRP: \$7,000* SKU 8982979	60 inches	34.5x57.688x2.531 inches; 110 pounds	1080p	N/A	4 HDMI; 1 Component; 1 Composite; 1 PC	N/A

\*Prices listed in this issue are for general reference and may vary from retailer pricing. \*\*unless specified, this is without stand

# HDTVs

## 5 Must-Have Accessories

**A**s you head toward the HDTV section of your local consumer-electronics store, you'll invariably pass shelves of bland-looking HDTV accessories.

Sure, these accessories have multi-channel audio, gold-plated connectors, nitrogen-injected insulation, and fully articulating mounting arms, but they can't compete visually with their big-screen flat-panel HDTV counterparts.

Despite outward appearances, however, there are a handful of accessories that are vital to getting the most from your HDTV. **FC**

BY ANDREW LEIBMAN



**1** **Wall mounts let you display your HDTV to its greatest advantage.** To help you see your TV from the best possible viewing angle, look into a swivel mount, which lets you adjust the vertical and horizontal positions. A wall-mounted HDTV also clears a bit of floor space and keeps your living room or home theater neat and clutter-free. Before hanging the wall mount and installing the television, make sure your theater recliners and couches are positioned where you'll be happy with them for a while so you don't have to drill new holes in the walls every time you want to rearrange the furniture.

**2** **TV stands are a good option if you'd rather not drill holes in your family room's newly painted walls.** Likewise, if your walls are made of cement or cinderblock, a stand is probably a better option than a wall mount. Today's A/V furniture manufacturers offer gorgeous showroom-style stands in a variety of materials, including warm wood (available in many stains), minimalist brushed steel, and clean-looking glass. You can get a triangular corner model, a high-backed cabinet that includes a mount for flat-panel HDTVs, or a rack with adjustable shelves to accommodate the rest of your A/V gear.



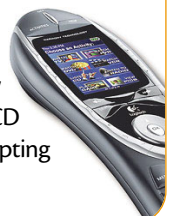
**3** **HDMI cables eliminate the need for multiple cables.** HDMI cables are all-in-one cords that carry uncompressed digital audio/video signals to and from your HDTV and its components, eliminating the need for separate A/V cables. Well-shielded cables cost a bit extra, but they're worth it because they eliminate interference from other components. Another feature you'll appreciate on the more costly cables is the connection—because the connector is well-built, it'll fit snugly in the port, so the cable won't work itself free when pets and small children accidentally jostle the cables.



**4** **A surround-sound system brings the aural experience of a theater home.** You've perhaps struggled to keep volume levels steady while watching TV. The intrusion of a loud commercial in the middle of your favorite show is startling; likewise, it's jolting when a quiet part of your favorite movie is suddenly interrupted by a too-loud scene change. A good-quality surround-sound system will feature an equalizer, which will prevent volume extremes in movies and HD broadcasts that are capable of 5.1 or better surround sound.



**5** **A universal remote lets you control all of your A/V equipment with one device.** No one—not your mom, dad, grandma, or even the kids—can figure out the remotes when there's a different one for each component in your home-theater system. Consolidate the controls with a programmable universal remote, which lets you control everything with a single device. Many of these remotes let you control as many as 15 devices at once, and some have a color LCD with backlighting, so you can see what you're opting to control in your dimly lit home theater.



# Beyond Megapixels

## It's What's On The Inside That Counts



hen admiring a friend's new digital camera, we often "ooh" and "ah" over its features. "This puppy has 12 megapixels,"

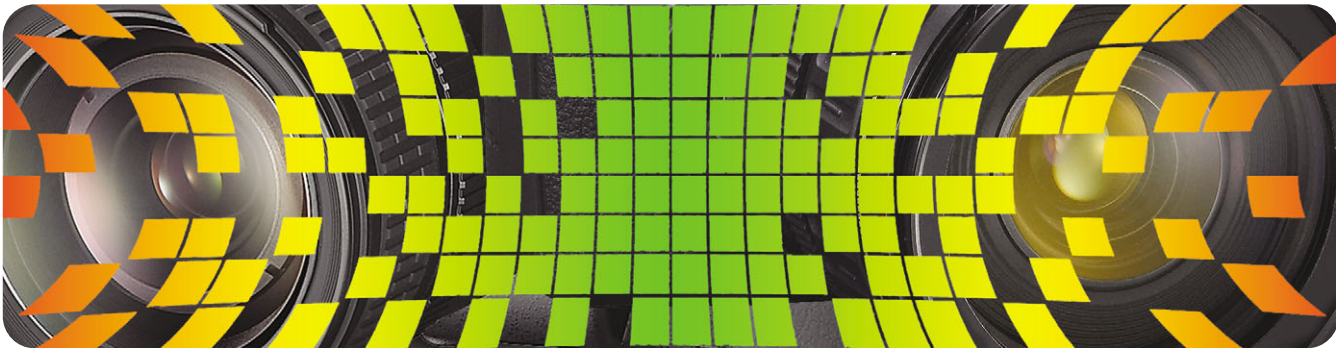
the friend says, and we respond affirmatively. But how often do we really understand what those top-notch features are and how they work? After all, the friend could just as easily have claimed that the shiny new camera had "32 jiggabits," and we would be impressed. (NOTE: *There's no such thing as a jiggabit.*)

necessarily a determining factor in the quality of the image itself.

The quality of a camera's image sensor has a lot to do with the image quality it can produce—as well as how many megapixels a camera has. An image sensor resides in the lens of a digital camera and is composed of millions of light-sensitive "photosites." When you press the button on your camera to take a picture, the shutter opens briefly, and light hits the photosites. Each one captures the light and creates one pixel of the image you just created.

advanced to the point that they're almost identical in quality.

Professional photographers and industry experts alike have disagreed on which of the two is better. Historically, CCDs offered better image quality and were less complex than CMOS sensors. CMOS sensors were more complicated, but that was due to the fact that each miniscule sensor on the chips included features such as amplification and noise correction; they also used less power (a major bonus for those concerned about camera battery life).



You may know that lots of megapixels is a good feature to have on a digital camera, but understanding how a megapixel rating is determined will help you understand more about what makes your camera tick.

### What Makes A Megapixel?

A megapixel is composed of 1 million pixels. These tiny pixels combine to form an image when you snap a photo with your digital camera. More megapixels means that you can print larger images from your photos but is not

However many millions of pixels are on the image sensor determines the megapixel rating of the camera. For example, an image sensor with 6 million pixels will be a 6MP camera.

### CCD vs. CMOS

There are two types of image sensors found in most digital cameras: CCD (charge-coupled device) and CMOS (complementary metal-oxide semiconductor). CCD is the older technology of the two, although it's by no means on its way to being obsolete. Rather, both CCD and CMOS technologies have

There is no general consensus about which is better. They both have pros and cons, but today these image sensors are more similar than ever, even in terms of price. Both sensors are readily found in both low- and high-end cameras.

So the next time someone wows you with his camera's beefy megapixel count, wow him right back with your newly acquired knowledge about how that rating came to be. **RG**

BY SETH COLANER

# From Digicam To Disc

## How To Preserve Your HD Memories



**S**o you got an awesome new HD camcorder, shot your first batch of footage, and—now what? You need to get this priceless footage onto a disc or your computer's hard drive so you'll have it stored for posterity.

### From Camcorder To PC

Today's digital camcorders make it easy to transfer both standard-definition and HD video from the camcorder to the computer. Whether you're using a miniDV, DVD, flash drive, or hard-drive camcorder, the device will need a cable to connect to your computer. The type of cable you need to use (USB 2.0 or FireWire) will depend on the type of camcorder you have. For example, hard-drive camcorders use the USB 2.0 interface, while miniDV's use FireWire. If you don't have the connection you need on your computer, you can always add a PCI card equipped with the requisite ports (for example, USB 2.0 or FireWire) to your computer.

### Burning Discs

If you have an HD digital camcorder and want to burn discs in HD, you need a BD (Blu-ray Disc) burner on your computer. These are readily available and will also be capable of burning DVDs. If you don't have one, you can always purchase a BD burner and have it installed on your computer.

With a Blu-ray Disc burner, you'll be able to burn your HD video to BDs. These discs are the only HD media that's capable of storing HD footage and hold much more video—25GB compared to the 4.7GB a DVD holds. Dual-layer BDs, which can have video burned on both sides of the disc, can actually hold up to 50GB, which means you can put nine hours of HD video or 23 hours of SD video on a single disc. Note that dual-layer DVDs offer twice the storage of regular DVDs.

In a pinch, you can use a camcorder's SD setting to quickly record and burn video to a disc. Keep in mind that this

faster method of preserving memories won't result in HD video, but you'll be able to burn your footage to a DVD with a standard PC or external standalone DVD burner.

### The AVCHD Codec

Created by Panasonic and Sony, AVCHD (Advanced Video Codec High Definition) is an up and coming way of compressing HD video. The upside to shooting with AVCHD is that it produces HD video in a compressed format (by leveraging MPEG-4 AVCHD/H.264 compression). It conveniently records directly onto miniDVDs, hard-drive camcorders, and flash memory cards.

What you may want to consider before buying a camera that only shoots AVCHD, however, is that if you want to edit the video, you need an exceptionally fast computer—think 2GB of RAM, a 3GHz processor, and perhaps even a 64-bit system. Working with footage from these models may also require a little more technical knowledge and computing time due to file conversion. Further, the codec is not yet widely supported, so not all video-editing programs will let you import and edit AVCHD.

With current technology, there are plenty of powerful ways to capture, edit, and distribute your HD memories. Forget the old VHS days; now you can preserve footage of the kids' baseball games and embarrassing home movies in HD. **FC**

BY SETH COLANER

# Optical vs. Digital Zoom

## See The Difference



DIGITAL IMAGING

**T**he zoom lens is a wonderful tool. You can zoom out to capture a wide-angle landscape or zoom in and use the camera's telephoto capabilities to bring a distant subject even closer. When shopping for a point-and-shoot camera (as opposed to a D-SLR), you'll notice that each camera features an optical zoom and a digital zoom. Before you get too enthusiastic about having the extra telephoto capabilities of a digital zoom, it's important to understand the difference between optical and digital zoom and how they affect image quality.

For both examples, we will imagine that we're taking pictures with a 5MP camera that is set to capture images at the highest quality level.

An optical zoom uses the camera's lens (optics) to magnify the view. When using only the optical zoom, the camera will capture an image file containing 5MP of image information. Because only the camera's lens is used to capture the full amount of megapixels, your image will be sharper and smoother than when using a digital zoom.

A digital zoom, which you can usually turn on or off in the camera's setup menu, engages when you've zoomed in as far as you can with the optical zoom. When looking at the camera's LCD or through the viewfinder, it appears that the camera is zooming in even more, but in reality, the camera has simply enlarged part of the image and cropped the rest. By cropping the image, the camera has discarded some of the image's pixels, leaving you with an image that contains far fewer pixels than

one shot with an optical zoom. For example, using our previous 5MP camera, we take a picture that engages digital zoom. The camera crops out 2MP of image data so the image file now contains only 3MP of image data. Because we're using a 5MP camera, however, the camera must produce an image with 5MP of data. In order to do this, the camera interpolates (invents) the missing pixels and adds them to the image file. The resulting image is almost always softer than the original, and individual pixels may be visible when the picture is enlarged.

So, when you're shopping for a digital camera, ignore the digital zoom specifications. And, for the best image quality and ability to make larger prints, use only the optical zoom when shooting. **FE**

BY THEANO NIKITAS

# Spanning The Spectrum

## Focal Lengths Explained

If you've shopped for a D-SLR camera, you've probably noticed that many are available in a kit that includes a camera body and lens. Kit lenses typically have a focal length range of 18 to 55mm. Focal length describes a lens' zoom capabilities. There are many other lenses available, each of which has a different purpose. For example, telephoto lenses let you zoom in to get a closer look, whereas wide-angle lenses let you see more of your surroundings. By understanding the difference in focal lengths among lenses, you'll have a better knowledge of which type of lens best suits your needs. If you're in the market for your first D-SLR, you may find that using a lens other than the kit lens will best suit your needs. As a result, you may decide to forgo the kit lens and save money by buying just the camera body and then put the money you saved toward a specialized lens.

### Basic Lens Types

Typically, lenses are grouped into categories based on their focal length. A

wide-angle lens gives you a broad field of view. Wide-angle lenses usually have a focal length of 30mm or less. Standard lenses have focal lengths ranging from about 30 to 50mm. This type of lens most closely matches the perspective of the human eye. Telephoto lenses magnify objects and typically have focal lengths more than 50mm. Lenses with a focal length greater than 200mm are called super-telephotos. Close-up or macro lenses let you focus on something that is a short distance from the camera. Macro lenses can range in focal length.

### Choose Your Zoom

In general, the kit lens that accompanies a D-SLR is a good starter lens. As your photographic needs grow, it's worth considering specialized lenses. Because focal length determines your range of view, it will play a big part in helping you decide which type of lens will best suit your photographic needs. **FG**

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON

## Shooting Range

A standard lens is perfect if you want a range of wide-angle to slightly telephoto views.

With a macro lens, you can take close-up

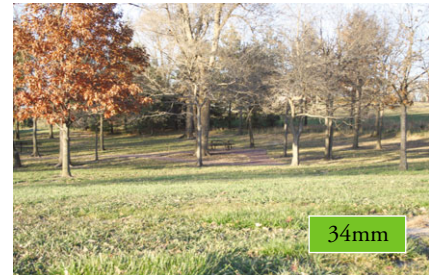
shots of small objects, such as flower petals.

If you're into nature photography, you may want a telephoto zoom lens. With

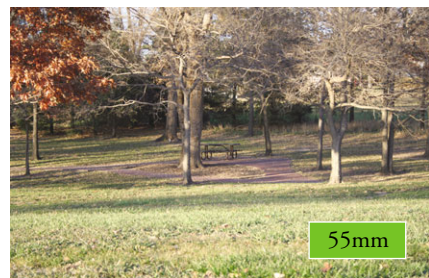
this lens, you'll be able to capture your son's facial expression as he shoots a goal, even if you're on the other end of the soccer field. ●



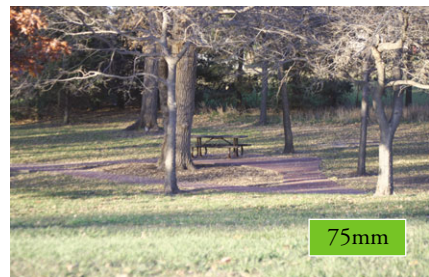
18mm



34mm



55mm



75mm



135mm



300mm

Here's a look at the same picture, using different focal lengths. Notice how the picnic table is hardly noticeable in the first shot but becomes very obvious when you zoom in.

# Digital Camcorders

## 5 Must-Have Accessories

Prices for digital camcorders continue to fall as picture quality increases, which is especially good news for first-time camcorder buyers. As a first-time buyer, you may not have a good idea of what else to include in your camcorder budget. Here are a few accessories we consider must-haves. **PG**

BY THEANO NIKITAS

1

**A bag protects your camcorder from potential hard knocks.** Whether you have tons of DV gear or only the minimum, a camera bag or case is probably one of the most important investments you'll make.

Obviously, a well-padded bag (or a hard case if you need to check your equipment when flying, for example) will protect your camera from knocks and short drops. At the same time, a camera bag can serve as a home for your DV gear; stow all your equipment and accessories in the bag, and you won't have to turn the house upside down to find that cable or extra DV tape.



4

**Experiment with different lens adapters, such as wide-angle or telephoto.** Digital camcorders usually have a much broader zoom range than digital still cameras, but if the zoom range isn't broad enough and your camcorder accepts accessory lenses, pick up a wide-angle or telephoto adapter lens. A wide-angle lens is great for tight spots, especially when you're indoors at a party where you may be too close to your subjects to get the full view you'd like. A telephoto lens, of course, allows you to get closer to subjects that are far away, such as performers in a ring at the circus or in rugged terrain when you're searching out wildlife.

2

**UV filters are an inexpensive way to keep your lens scratch-free.** If your camcorder has a threaded lens, you might want to invest in a UV (ultraviolet) filter. Some people use a UV filter to protect the lens from scratches, as well as dirt, sand, and other outdoor photo hazards, because it's much less expensive to replace a filter than a lens or camera. And, because the filter cuts down on UV light, you'll get clearer and more-detailed footage when you're shooting in high-UV conditions, such as in the mountains, so those great landscape shots will look even more impressive.



3

**A tripod holds your camcorder steady, so guests don't get sick when they watch your vacation video.** You may have smooth moves on the dance floor, but can any of us really say that we can hold a camcorder as steadily as we'd like to? Probably not. That's where a tripod comes in. A tripod that's sturdy

enough to hold the weight of the camcorder (check the specs) and equipped with a three-way pan/tilt head (the head is the part the camera is attached to) will allow you to smoothly pan the action as your daughter runs down the basketball court to score her winning shot or to follow the path of a bird from the tree up to the sky as it disappears from view. And, if you want a static, steady shot, just put the camera on the tripod, press record, and let it run—just make sure to place the camera and tripod out of harm's way, especially at parties and group events.



5

**Spare batteries ensure that you'll be able to continue shooting your son's basketball game, even when it goes into overtime.** There are times when you'll want to shoot video in the best quality for a fairly continuous amount of time, which can drain the battery. Recharging the battery takes time that you may not have. It's a good idea to have a fully charged backup battery in your case so you don't miss any of the action—whether it's the grand finale of your daughter's first piano recital; the final, heart-stopping minutes of your son's hockey game; or the entirety of your kids' class play.



# Essential

## THINGS TO KNOW

### Camera Capabilities

#### Focal Length

**Q** What is focal length as it relates to a camera?

**A** Focal length is the distance from the lens to the film, or focal point. Typically, removable lenses are rated depending on their maximum focal length, such as 50mm or 300mm.

**Q** How does a zoom lens work to change the focal length?

**A** When you twist the focus ring of a camera lens, the lenses inside move closer to or farther away from each other to adjust the focal length.

**Q** Is it true that lenses with longer focal lengths take blurrier pictures?

**A** Not exactly; a longer lens means you can “see” farther to take a picture, but it’s also harder to balance all that lens weight, so you need a shorter exposure to get clear shots.

**Q** Can you use film SLR camera lenses on a D-SLR?

**A** Sometimes, though not all SLR lenses are compatible with D-SLRs. The likelihood of compatibility increases if you are using the same brand of camera and lens.

#### Zoom

**Q** Do D-SLRs have unlimited zoom potential?

**A** In short, yes. With a D-SLR, you can change lenses, so you can buy a lens that has more powerful zoom capabilities.

**Q** Should I care about digital zoom?

**A** Digital zoom is a “fake” zoom of sorts; it interpolates pixels to try to increase the perceived zoom distance. When you’re buying a camera, focus on optical zoom, which describes a camera’s true zooming capabilities.

**Q** How much optical zoom do I really need?

**A** More is always better because it will enable you to take better pictures of faraway objects. However, this functionality comes at a price, so buy what you can afford.

**Q** What does “combined” or “total” zoom mean?

**A** “Combined” or “total” zoom reflects a camera’s collective digital and optical zoom capabilities. For example, a total zoom of 10X may really be 5X optical and 2X digital zoom.



## Battery Life

### Q How is battery life measured?

A CIPA (Camera & Imaging Products Association) determines the standards manufacturers use to measure battery life. Manufacturers must adhere to certain guidelines in order to list a CIPA battery life rating.

### Q Which nonproprietary battery packs the most battery life?

A When it comes to purchasing AA batteries, NiMH (nickel-metal hydride) batteries last much longer than traditional alkaline batteries.

### Q Are lithium and Li-Ion (lithium-ion) batteries the same?

A No, but they are similar. They have the same chemistry, but most lithium AA batteries are nonrechargeable, while Li-Ion batteries are rechargeable and proprietary.

### Q What is power-saving mode?

A Your camera's power-saving mode will turn off the camera or put it to sleep after it has been idle for a specified period of time.

### Q Which features can affect battery life?

A Both optical and digital zoom can eat up your battery life, as can your flash. Additionally, playing back pictures and videos over and over will eat up battery life.

## Image Stabilization

### Q What is image stabilization?

A Often abbreviated as IS, image stabilization is a feature that helps produce sharper images by reducing the amount of blurring that can occur from camera shake.

### Q What are the other names for IS?

A You may find that image stabilization is also referred to as anti-shake, anti-blur, vibration reduction, blur reduction, motion blur suppression, or a high ISO mode.

### Q When should I use the IS feature on my camera?

A IS is ideal for situations where your hands may shake accidentally or in low-light situations when you want to use a slower shutter speed.

### Q Do all digital cameras have image stabilization?

A Not every camera has an IS feature, but IS is becoming much more popular and can be found in many point-and-shoot, prosumer, and D-SLR cameras.

### Q How do I use the IS feature on my camera?

A The IS feature on many cameras can be found on a scroll wheel that lists the main modes or may be set through a special menu. Your camera's help guide will show you how to access your IS feature.



**OLYMPUS**

# Digital Camera

## Tough Enough For Everyday Life

DIGITAL IMAGING



Olympus  
Stylus 850 SW

MSRP: \$299.99

SKU: 8696128 (orange)

[www.olympusamerica.com](http://www.olympusamerica.com)

### Quick Overview

Whether you take this camera to the beach, to the slopes, or just out on the town, its all-weather design will keep it safe from harm. Packed into its durable exterior are powerful image-enhancing features, including face detection and image stabilization, to ensure that every shot comes out looking great.

### Perfect For

The Stylus 850 SW is designed for active people who want a tough camera that can keep up with their on-the-go lifestyles. Incredibly durable, sleek, and stylish, the Stylus 850 SW is a must-have vacation and party accessory.

### Outstanding Benefits

- **Shockproof (5 feet)**—rugged metal body and revolutionary shock-absorbing construction
- **Waterproof (10 feet)**—waterproof seals and gaskets allow you to take underwater movies and pictures
- **Freezeproof (14°F)**—winterized to perform at sub-freezing temperatures
- **8MP CCD**—take vibrant, high-resolution photos
- **3x optical/5x digital zoom**—take close-up shots from a distance
- **2.5-inch HyperCrystal™ LCD**—anti-glare technology and wide viewing angle

### Coollest Feature

**Waterproof (10 feet).** Don't just take it to the pool, take it *in* the pool. Innovative waterproof seals and gaskets allow you to take amazing underwater pictures and movies in the pool or even in the ocean.

**FirstGlimpse**



## High-Definition Camcorder Powerful, Yet Affordable HD



### A-HD+1080P High Definition Camcorder

MSRP: \$199.99

SKU: 8775943

[www.aiptek.com](http://www.aiptek.com)

DIGITAL IMAGING

### Quick Overview

Aiptek's 1080P High Definition Digital Camcorder will allow you to capture stunning HD 1080P (1,440 x 1,080 with 16:9 aspect ratio) video at 30 frames per second with advanced H.264 high-end compression technology. Enjoy video playback on your high-def or standard-def TV and your PC or Mac! With five scene modes and night recording technology, this HD digital camcorder makes it easy to capture digital photos and video in a variety of light and scene conditions.

### Perfect For

This camcorder is perfect for anyone who records fast-action sporting events.

### Outstanding Benefits

- **4X digital zoom.** Lets you zoom in on your desired subject with stunning clarity.
- **2.4-inch color LCD monitor with color viewfinder.**
- **5-megapixel CMOS sensor.**
- **Night recording capability.** Great for low-light situations.
- **Includes five scene modes**—Auto, Sunny, Cloudy, Tungsten, and Fluorescent to achieve natural tones in a variety of scene conditions.
- **Records high-definition video.**
- **Saves video in MOV format.**
- **Records in both** standard 4:3 and widescreen 16:9 aspect ratios.

### Coollest Feature

Connect the camera to your TV/VCR/DVD player to record your favorite movies, TV shows, and other programs.



# Memory Card

## SD Memory Card Makes Your Camera Wireless

DIGITAL IMAGING



### Eye-Fi Home

MSRP: \$79.99

SKU: 8925504

[www.eye.fi](http://www.eye.fi)

### Quick Overview

The Eye-Fi Home is a wireless memory card that automatically uploads your photos from camera to your computer—no cords or cables needed. Simply turn on your camera within range of your home Wi-Fi network and your photos will wirelessly upload to your PC or Mac computer. Eye-Fi works with any digital camera that accepts an SD memory card to transform your camera into a “wireless” device.

### Perfect For

Camera owners who never get around to uploading photos to their computer to store and later share with friends and family.

### Outstanding Benefits

- Wirelessly uploads photos to your PC or Mac computer
- A 2GB storage capacity means you can store hundreds of images
- Works with any digital camera that uses an SD memory card
- Add Web Sharing Service: Eye-Fi Home users can add Eye-Fi’s popular Web-sharing service to send photos directly from camera to computer and one of more than 25 online photo-sharing Web sites (annual service fee: \$9.99)
- Add Geotagging Service: Eye-Fi Home users can upgrade their card to geotag photos with geographic information about where a photo was taken (annual service fee: \$14.99)

### Coollest Feature

The Eye-Fi Home works like magic to automatically upload your photos directly to your PC or Mac computer.



# Memory Card

## World's First Wireless, Web-Sharing SD Memory Card



### Eye-Fi Share

MSRP: \$99.99

SKU: 8853886

[www.eye.fi](http://www.eye.fi)

DIGITAL IMAGING

### Quick Overview

The Eye-Fi Share is a wireless memory card that automatically uploads your photos from a camera to your computer and favorite photo-sharing Web site—no cords or cables needed. Simply turn on your camera when you get home and your photos will wirelessly upload through your Wi-Fi network. Eye-Fi works with any digital camera that accepts an SD memory card, just swap your current card with the Eye-Fi Share to transform your camera into a “wireless” device.

### Perfect For

Camera owners who never get around to sharing their photos with friends and family or find it a major hassle to do so.

### Outstanding Benefits

- Wirelessly uploads photos to your computer and favorite photo-sharing Web site
- PC and Mac compatible, 2GB storage capacity
- Uploads to one of more than 25 online photo-sharing sites
- Works with any digital camera that uses an SD memory card
- Add Geotagging Service: Eye-Fi Share users can upgrade their card to geotag photos with geographic information about where a photo was taken (annual service fee of \$14.99)
- Add Hotspot Access: Eye-Fi Share users can upgrade their card to automatically upload photos away from home at more than 10,000 Wayport hotspots (annual service fee of \$14.99)

### Coollest Feature

The Eye-Fi Share works like magic to automatically upload your photos directly to your computer and favorite photo-sharing account.

## Which Point-&-Shoot Camera Is Best For You?

If you're a little confused about the most important features in a digital camera, you're not alone. In this chart, we compare features from select digital cameras, and we also explain what these features mean.

		Resolution; Optical zoom	Shutter speed	Memory card	LCD size	Battery life	ISO	Movie mode
What It Means		More pixels mean bigger and clearer prints; Moves the lens closer to your subject	A faster shutter speed will let you snap action photos without blur	Removable card that stores your photos in your camera	The LCD is the display on the back of the camera	Based on how many shots you can take on a single charge	A higher ISO lets you take better photos in low-light settings	Lets you record short video clips on your digital camera
	<b>FujiFilm FinePix J12</b> MSRP: \$129.99* SKU 8942549	8.2MP; 3X	8 to 1/2,000 seconds	SD/SDHC/ xD-Picture Card	2.5 inches	N/A	Auto; Manual: 64, 100, 400, 800, 1600	Yes
	<b>Kodak EasyShare M1073</b> MSRP: \$179.95* SKU 9018564	10.2MP; 3X	4 to 1/2,000 seconds	SD/SDHC	2.7 inches	N/A	Auto; Manual: 80, 100, 200, 400, 800, 1000	Yes
	<b>Olympus FE-370</b> MSRP: \$199.99* SKU 8960074	8MP; 5X	1/2 to 1/2,000 second	xD-Picture Card	2.7 inches	200 shots	Auto; Manual: 64, 100, 200, 400, 800, 1600, 3200	Yes
	<b>Casio Exilim EX-Z250SR</b> MSRP: \$249.99* SKU 9107487	9.1MP; 4X	1/2 to 1/2,000 second	SD/SDHC/ MMC/ MMC plus	3 inches	322 shots	Auto; Manual: 64, 100, 200, 400, 800, 1600	Yes
	<b>Canon SD880 IS</b> MSRP: \$299.99* SKU 8968325	10MP; 4X	15 to 1/1,600 seconds	SD/SDHC/ MMC/MMC Plus Card/HC MMC Plus	3 inches	310 shots	Auto; Manual: 80, 100, 200, 400, 800, 1600	Yes
	<b>Olympus Stylus 850 SW</b> MSRP: \$299.99* SKU 8696128	8MP; 3X	1/2 to 1/1,000 second	xD-Picture Card/ microSD	2.5 inches	190 shots	Auto; Manual: 64, 100, 200, 400, 800, 1600	Yes
	<b>Nikon Coolpix P80</b> MSRP: \$399.95* SKU 8791097	10.1MP; 18X	8 to 1/2,000 seconds	SD/SDHC	2.7 inches	250 shots	Auto; Manual: 64, 100, 200, 400, 800, 1600, 3200, 6400	Yes
	<b>Sony Cyber-shot DSC-T700</b> MSRP: \$399.99* SKU 8942601	10.1MP; 4X	1/4 to 1/1,000 second	Memory Stick/Memory Stick PRO Duo	3.5 inches	N/A	Auto; Manual: 80, 100, 200, 400, 800, 1600, 3200	Yes

\*Prices listed in this issue are for general reference and may vary from retailer pricing.

## Which D-SLR Is Best For You?

As D-SLR prices keep coming down, more photographers are turning to them, both as a first camera and as a trade-up to something better. In this chart, we'll help you sort through some of the features and performance specs from select D-SLR cameras.

What It Means		Resolution	LCD size	ISO range	Kit lens	Burst speed	Shutter speed
		Image sensor in megapixels; more means a bigger image	Diagonal measure of display on back of camera	A higher ISO range will let you take better photos in low-light situations	Standard lens bundled with the camera body	Frames per second (fps) you can shoot while in burst mode	The wider the range, the greater the gamut of long exposures to frozen action
	<b>Casio Exilim EX-FH20</b> MSRP: \$599.99* SKU 9051063	9.1MP	3 inches	100 to 1600	N/A (fixed lens equivalent to 26-520mm f/2.8-4.5)	40fps	1 to 1/2,000 seconds
	<b>Sony Alpha DSLR-A300K</b> MSRP: \$599.99* SKU 8942512	10.2MP	2.7 inches	100 to 3200	DT 18-70mm f/3.5-5.6	3fps	30 to 1/4,000 seconds
	<b>Olympus Evolt E-520</b> MSRP: \$699.99* SKU 8928958	10MP	2.7 inches	100 to 1600	14-42mm f/3.5-5.6 Zuiko lens	2.5fps to card capacity	60 to 1/4,000 seconds
	<b>Canon EOS Rebel XSi</b> MSRP: \$799.99* SKU 8794691	12.2MP	3 inches	100 to 1600	EF-S 18-55mm f/3.6-5.6 IS	3.5fps up to 53 shots	30 to 1/4,000 seconds
	<b>Panasonic Lumix DMC-L10K</b> MSRP: \$1,299.99* SKU 8815464	10.1MP	2.5 inches	100 to 1600	LEICA D VARIO-ELMAR 14-50mm f/3.8-5.6	3fps to card capacity	60 to 1/4,000 seconds
	<b>Canon EOS 50D</b> MSRP: \$1,599.99* SKU 9004427	15.1MP	3 inches	100 to 1600	EF 28-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS USM lens	6.3fps	30 to 1/8,000 seconds
	<b>Olympus E-3</b> MSRP: \$1,699* SKU 8682776	10.1MP	2.5 inches	100 to 3200	N/A (body only)	5fps to card capacity	60 to 1/8,000 seconds
	<b>Nikon D700</b> MSRP: \$2,999.99* SKU 8928985	12.1MP	3 inches	200 to 6400	N/A (body only)	5fps	30 to 1/8,000 seconds

\*Prices listed in this issue are for general reference and may vary from retailer pricing.

## Which Digital Camcorder Is Best For You?

Digital camcorders come in a number of formats: DVD, hard drive, flash drive, MiniDV, and high definition are the most common. By comparing the following digital camcorders, you can determine which recording format and product best fit your style.

		LCD size	Optical zoom; Digital zoom	Recording speeds	Memory card	Digital still resolution	Lines of resolution	
What It Means		Diagonal length of viewing screen	Two methods for magnifying depth of field; optical zoom is better	The speeds a particular cam- corder can uti- lize during recording	Compatible flash card types (cards not in- cluded unless noted)	The number of megapixels the camcorder can capture in still images	Number of lines of horizontal reso- lution; the higher the number, the greater the detail	
MiniDV		<b>Panasonic PV-GS90</b> MSRP: \$279.95* SKU 8671528	2.7 inches	42X; 2,000X	SP/LP	N/A	N/A	
		<b>Panasonic VDR-D50</b> MSRP: \$349.95* SKU 8673269	2.7 inches	42X; 2,000X	XP/SP/LP	SD/SDHC	0.3MP	500
DVD		<b>Samsung SC-MX20</b> MSRP: \$299* SKU 8907365	2.7 inches	34X; 1,200X	N/A	SD/SDHC	N/A	N/A
		<b>Canon FS100</b> MSRP: \$399* SKU 8732598	2.7 inches	37X; 2,000X	XP/SP/LP	SD/SDHC	0.8MP	N/A
Flash Drive		<b>Canon VIXIA HG20</b> MSRP: \$949* SKU 8916925	2.7 inches	12X; 200X	LP/SP/XP+/ FXP/MXP	SD/SDHC	2.76MP	N/A
		<b>JVC GZ-HD30US</b> MSRP: \$999.99* SKU 8894333	2.8 inches	10X; 200X	MPEG-2: FHD/1440CBR; AVCHD: XP/SP/EP	microSD/ microSDHC	3.3MP	1,080
Hard Drive		<b>Sony HDR-CX12</b> MSRP: \$899.99* SKU 8894388	2.7 inches	12X; 150X	FH/HQ/SP/ LP	Memory Stick PRO Duo	10.2MP	1,080
		<b>Canon VIXIA HF11</b> MSRP: \$1,199* SKU 8917069	2.7 inches	12X; 200X	LP/SP/XP+/ FXP/MXP	SD/SDHC	2.76MP	N/A
Flash Drive								

\*Prices listed in this issue are for general reference and may vary from retailer pricing.

# Collaborate & Cooperate

## When Your Gadgets Work Together, You Win

**I**f it seems to you that consumer electronics devices now come with everything but the kitchen sink, think again. The kitchen sink is slated for the next model.

OK, we kid. But after years of CE, phone, and computer manufacturers talking about “convergence,” it has pretty much happened.

By convergence, we mean that devices have taken on new capabilities, some of which overlap with *other* devices, and vice versa. In other words, two gadgets that used to be very different—such as cell phones and notebook computers—now have more in common than not. Both let you access the Web, wirelessly. Both also let you make phone calls and send all sorts of electronic messages. The following articles touch upon five different types of home electronics and how they’ve grown toward each other in features and usage.

There’s another side of convergence, however, and that involves ways that CE and computer devices can interact with each other. Here, we’ll talk about ways you can combine the gizmos in your life to unlock new possibilities.

In many ways, an HDTV is the centerpiece of your home entertainment. Many models now come with USB ports and memory card slots, like a PC or digital photo frame. You can load up a USB flash drive with your latest photos, for instance, and then plug it into your HDTV for a big-screen slideshow right there in your living room. As for your new

high-def camcorder, you can edit its video on your PC and then burn a BD (Blu-ray Disc) to play back on your TV.



An LCD HDTV is a perfect example of convergence between the computer and home-theater realms. Thin LCDs spread from laptop screens to power- and space-saving desktop monitors over the years. Today, LCD technology powers the majority of HDTVs sold. In many cases, however, you can still use your LCD (or other) HDTV as a computer monitor. You’ll need the right kind of cable or adapter to make the connection, and you’ll definitely want to adjust your PC’s video settings for the best picture.

Somewhere along the line, video-game consoles became serious home-entertainment hubs. Sony’s PlayStation 3 and Microsoft’s Xbox 360 can both stream audio and video files from your computer to your HDTV and sound system. They can play movie discs, too.

A few years ago, it took a Mac or PC to offload photos from your digital camera, and only then could you send the files to your printer. Today, you can hook up your digicam directly to a photo printer, and some printers can read your pics directly from your camera’s flash memory card. Many digital photo frames can import photos in the same way.

Working together, your CE devices and computer can keep you in control of your productivity, entertainment, and cherished memories. **RE**

BY MARTY SEMS

# A Meeting Of Home-Theater Minds

## Technology That's Leading To Home Theater Convergence

FEATURE

A

s home-theater technology has advanced from console TVs and Hi-Fi systems to big-screen HDTVs and 5.1-channel surround sound, entertainment centers have become packed with more individual components, such as DVRs, game consoles, and media-center computers. However, manufacturers now integrate technology once limited to individual devices into your HDTV and receiver. To help you select components with enhanced functionality, we'll examine a few key convergence features.

### It's In The DLNA

Most people perform a number of steps to display a photo or video from their PC or camera onto an HDTV. Devices with DLNA (Digital Living Network Alliance) compatibility, such as Yamaha's RX-V3900 (\$1,899.95; [www.yamaha.com](http://www.yamaha.com)) receiver, can "talk" with other DLNA-certified devices on your home network at the push of a button. You'll no longer need to hook up cables, copy files, or connect a special device to play back music, photos, and video on your home theater. In the future, a DLNA-certified HDTV or receiver may also let you to instant message and voice chat via your entertainment center.

### Tune In

It's a good time to be a music fan. Whether you prefer to download your favorite songs, hear music via Internet radio, or listen



to customized programming on satellite radio, it's relatively easy to find music that fits your mood. To play music from your portable media player, many receivers now offer docking stations that are compatible with popular players, and some have an integrated Ethernet port for Internet radio access. XM Radio and Sirius Satellite Radio-ready receivers are designed to let you expand satellite radio beyond the traditional in-car setting.

### Whole-House Audio

You want to watch a movie; the kids want to listen to music. With a receiver that offers multizone compatibility, you pipe the music to another room, while you get to enjoy a movie in peace. Many multizone models feature enough outputs for two or three extra audio streams. Typically, manufacturers include a supplementary remote, so those in the secondary room can switch the audio. Of course, receivers with multizone compatibility can also play the same music over all the connected speakers—ideal for creating a party atmosphere. **FG**

### Stream Netflix Directly To Your DVD Player

LG's BD300 NETWORK BLU-RAY DISC PLAYER (\$399.95; [www.lgusa.com](http://www.lgusa.com)) enables you to view movies from Netflix's Watch Now library using your home broadband Internet connection. Netflix subscribers have unlimited access to more than 12,000 movies and TV shows. For more information about the BD300, see page 8. ●

BY NATHAN LAKE

# Merging Together

## One Digital Imaging Device, Many Functions

T

he line that separates one type of digital imaging device from another is blurring every day. For example, digital cameras today can capture video, and digital video cameras can capture still images. Read on as we discuss what some of these overlapping technologies and devices have to offer.

### Digital Cameras

Although their primary focus is still-life pictures, many digital cameras today can capture short video clips with audio. If you're looking for a camera that can serve this dual purpose, look for one with high frame rates so the captured video is as smooth as possible. A few digital cameras also have built-in Wi-Fi or can accept a Wi-Fi enabled flash memory card, giving you the ability to upload your pictures while on the go.

### Digital Video Cameras

For users who care most about video but also want to capture a still shot here and there, look for a video camera that can capture decent still-life photos. When shopping for such a device, pay attention to the camera's optics, megapixels, storage format, and photo storage capacity. In general, higher megapixels and storage capacities will give you better results. It's also wise to test



a camcorder's picture-taking abilities in-store, both to see if you like the placement of the controls and to see the quality of still pictures the camcorder can capture.

### Digital Photo Frames

Digital photo frames are another area where we've seen increased convergence in recent years. The obvious focus of these devices is the ability to display photos, but some of these frames also have built-in Wi-Fi connectivity, which lets you access your photo collection on your PC from a remote location. With this functionality, you can stream photos from your favorite Web sites to the frame. Wi-Fi capability can also provide easy access to news, weather, and sports information directly on the frame—no PC needed. If your frame has built-in speakers, you can play soundtracks while viewing your favorite photos. In addition to playing soundtracks from a memory card, some frames have inputs and outputs that make it possible to connect to your MP3 player, as well. Finally, digital frames are not limited to still pictures; some can play video files, as well. **FC**

## Connectivity Between Devices

DIFFERENT DEVICES use different communications formats to connect with one another. Here's a quick look at three popular connection methods.

**Bluetooth.** Bluetooth is a short-range wireless communications standard that supports data transmissions up to 30 feet.

**Wi-Fi.** Just as your laptop has built-in Wi-Fi that allows you to surf the Internet, send emails, and more, some new CE devices also have the ability to access a Wi-Fi hotspot, connect to the Internet, and upload or download content such as photos and videos.

**Cable.** The most traditional method of connecting devices is to attach them by means of a cable. This is pretty foolproof, though you'll often be limited in terms of distance. ●

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON

# Welcome To Multimedia Fusion

## PC Convergence Continues Its Transformation

FEATURE

**F**or years computers and televisions have resided in different rooms. After all, a TV is for sharing entertainment in the living room, and a PC is for individual computing. Right? Well, you can forget all you've known because CE convergence is amalgamating these devices into a single product with one interface. Sure, you can still browse the Web, edit a Word document, and upload photos, but now your PC can double as a media center computer.

### Putting It All Together

This new PC will store all your new multimedia (music, videos, movies, etc.) and let you watch them on an HD interface, so you can enjoy unparalleled entertainment on your "TV/PC," if you will. With a TV tuner (a PC component that receives a television signal) and connection to the Internet or wireless home network, you can play, record, and pause live TV—skipping the commercials—in the same way you would use a DVR, essentially. Keep in mind, however, that this technology requires an HDMI connection to transmit the best quality audio and video to your monitor or HDTV.

By installing specific operating systems or programs, you can remotely stream live and recorded television programming



on your Internet browser or an alternative program. If your media center PC is connected to the HDTV as part of your home theater, you can take advantage of using it as a home-entertainment hub. This is more specifically called a home-theater PC because it can function as a digital media recorder, server, and storage device for your entire home-theater system.

### Tricked-Out Convergence

NOW THAT YOU'RE ONBOARD the TV/PC convergence trolley, you can start adding some extra parts to make the ride a bit more exciting.

For instance, you could invest in a **wireless keyboard and mouse** combo, so you can freely interact with your media center PC without feeling tethered to your PC tower. Though we suggest this component quite often, you really can't go wrong with a high-end **universal remote**, which is ideal for not only managing your home-theater PC but also the components such as Blu-ray Disc players and receivers that fill up your entertainment room.

Select **software** will also enhance your convergence experience; some media suites are incorporated into operating systems, while others are offered as a standalone package. ●

### Where To Next?

As you can see, TV technologies are no longer limited to the tube nor are your PC capabilities purely confined to a standard system. Now that these two digital realms are making a united pact for the future, you should expect the consolidation of these devices to develop beyond what you could ever expect. **FG**

BY JOANNA SAFFORD

# Talk & More

## Today's Phones Share More Than Just Minutes

If you've shopped for a mobile phone recently, you know that there are many different types of phones and features from which to choose. A simple flip phone is no longer just a simple flip phone, for example. Today, it's also a multimedia player, a camera, and a text-messaging device. Here's a quick look at some of the many technologies and functions available on mobile phones today.

### Camera

Just a few years ago, the cameras that were built into mobile phones were relatively useless. Sure, you could take pictures, but the result was not something you'd print and cherish forever. Instead, they were pictures where having a relatively low-resolution shot was better than no shot at all. That's not necessarily the case today; many of today's phones offer much better optics and the ability to take higher resolution photos than the 1MP or 2MP camera phones of a few years ago.

### GPS

Some phones today have built-in GPS receivers. If your phone has this functionality, you can use it to help you find your way to your hotel, meeting spot, or favorite restaurant. Free, downloadable applications are available, as are navigational services from many carriers. If your phone doesn't have a built-in GPS receiver, but it has Bluetooth, look for a wireless GPS receiver to connect to your phone for similar functionality.

### Wireless Isn't Just Wireless

TODAY, MANY PHONES have high-speed Internet browsing capabilities built in. If your phone supports EVDO (Evolution Data Optimized) Release 0 or Rev. A or HSDPA (High-Speed Downlink Packet Access), you should be able to browse the Web using a high-speed cellular data connection. Of course, fees will apply, so be sure to check with your carrier before you do too much surfing. For users who want to explore all that the Web has to offer, ask your carrier for an unlimited data plan so you won't have to pay pesky data overage charges. ●



### Memory Card

The storage capacity of many phones is not limited solely by the amount of memory that comes preloaded from the manufacturer. Many of today's phones have a memory card expansion slot. Because it is small and compact, many phones use the microSD memory card format, which is available in capacities up to 16GB.

### Internet Browsing

All of the major carriers in the United States offer high-speed cellular data connections. If your phone supports a high-speed data connection (see the "Wireless Isn't Just Wireless" sidebar for more info), you can search the Web from your phone. Many phones today even have a full-featured Web browser preinstalled on the phone, which brings a more desktop-like browsing experience to your mobile device. **FG**

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON

# Beyond Just The Game

## Engage In Your Own Gaming Convergence Experience

**T**he idea of technological convergence is expanding as media and communication devices advance. If you haven't paid attention to the innovations that are synergizing your gaming entertainment and information, it's time to recognize what's new and how convergence can make your digital life more efficient.

### Consoles For All

Gaming convergence pushes the limits of how you can utilize your game console; it combines features such as HD graphics, online gaming, television programming, music, and other media preferences to create a dynamic entertainment experience.

The latest consoles offer something for gamers, movie lovers, and audiophiles alike. For instance, consoles that support HD resolutions, including 720p and 1080p, are ideal for enjoying intense graphics. The "p" notes progressive-scan format, which will quickly process fast-paced games. Other consoles include a customized CPU; this component will enhance your gaming environment with its triple-core architecture and hi-def output.

For those who are more interested in using a gaming console to play DVDs or Blu-ray Discs (which offer increased media



capacity and HD video), the Sony PlayStation 3 supports both formats for your viewing pleasure.

### There's Even More?

Don't forget that game consoles are designed for substantial storage with room for more than game saves. Microsoft's Xbox 360 gives you up to 20GB of hard drive space. With such convenient storage, you can enjoy a variety of media by switching from your gaming session to your personal photo collection.

You shouldn't be surprised to hear that gaming consoles are also Wi-Fi ready, so avid gamers can participate in online-enabled play free from cords. With Wi-Fi you can also download a variety of digital entertainment such as gaming demos, trailers, and other Internet content.

### Convergent Convenience

TO GET THE MOST out of your console, don't forget to accessorize with some home-media equipment. We've suggested a few options you may want to consider.

**Universal remote.** A universal remote can not only control the functions of your console but also your TV, home-theater speakers, digital video recorder, media center PC, and other home-entertainment components.

**Wireless networking adapter.** This gadget lets you tap into a wireless network if you prefer to compete with Internet players that are also connected to your home network.

**USB Web cam.** Some consoles support Web cams for online chatting and photo sharing with up to six players.

**Memory card.** If you want to save your game progress along with MP3s, you can add some removable storage for easy backup. ●

### Convergence & The Future

You don't have to catch up to technological convergence; all you need to do is take note of the capabilities your gaming console already offers. **FC**

BY JOANNA SAFFORD

# Antivirus & Antispyware Software

## Do You Get What You Pay For?



**R**ound-the-clock protection: It's essential for a Windows PC in today's world. If you own a PC and you run Windows, you need security software with antivirus and antispyware capabilities.

Remarkably for such a lucrative market—households typically pay \$50 or more per year to subscribe to the most recent virus definition updates—there are several capable freebies in the antivirus/antispyware genre.

And yet, if all you use is free software, can you really consider your PC safe? And if the unthinkable happens and your computer catches an infection, will there be anyone you can call for help?

In most cases, free editions of antivirus and antispyware utilities offer less

protection than their vendors' pay versions. Their purpose is to get users comfortable with their brands, so when it's time to upgrade to more comprehensive security measures, people will buy the software that's most familiar to them.

One key difference between free and pay versions is that the gratis editions lack phone tech support. Another is the fact that you're not supposed to use a freebie at work or in a home business. Some free AV/AS software doesn't automatically update itself, instead requiring you to manually click an update button when you remember to. In addition, a few free editions only detect malware and won't remove it.

Some free offerings lack real-time shields that keep your system from becoming infected. Instead, all you get is a scanning and removal tool which, in certain

cases, isn't enough to return your PC to normal and recover all of your personal data unaltered.

One popular free tool gives you antivirus/antispyware with continuous protection, automatic updating, and search engine results scanning that warns you away from potentially infested Web sites. What it *doesn't* provide is protection against rootkits, which can hide other malware from conventional antivirus/antispyware scans. The pay version of the software does detect and remove rootkits, however. It also comes with phone tech support, plus protection while you're instant messaging, downloading files, or just surfing around.

Finally, there are Internet security suites. These usually add a firewall and anti-spam capabilities to the typical gamut of antivirus/antispyware. Suites offer utilities that are made to complement each other without conflict. They also can save you money over buying individual security apps piecemeal.

Strong protection is even more important if you're buying antivirus/antispyware for a novice user. Beginners aren't as wary about opening email attachments or spotting fake security pop-ups, so chances are that free software won't entirely cover their needs. Besides, if a problem does crop up, a paid subscription will give them someone to call for tech support ... instead of you. **PC**

BY MARTY SEMS

# Surf The Wi-Fi Wave

## What You Need To Use Wi-Fi With Your Laptop



Wi-Fi is popping up everywhere. Not only are people using it for their wireless home networks, but now shopping malls, coffee shops, airports, and other public places are touting Wi-Fi availability.

All of this talk about Wi-Fi may have left you wondering what it is and how you can get it. Here we will explain Wi-Fi basics and show you how you can start using it on your laptop.

### What Is Wi-Fi?

Wi-Fi is wireless Ethernet that many homes and businesses use to deliver high-speed Internet access without the need for wires. The fastest, most current version that is fully approved by the IEEE (which sets the standards for Wi-Fi) is 802.11g; the draft version of 802.11n is much quicker, but according to the IEEE, it isn't scheduled to be fully approved until November. Even though 802.11n isn't fully endorsed yet, you can purchase devices that are Draft N-compliant.

### Get The Right Tools

If you want Wi-Fi for your home network, you will need to purchase a wireless router. To get the quickest Internet speeds possible, look for a router that supports 802.11g and Draft N standards. Routers are usually backward compatible, so if you get a router that supports 802.11g and Draft N standards, you should be able to use it with your 802.11b devices also. However, be sure to double-check compatibility with all of your devices before making



your final purchase. It's important to also note that your network will only run as fast as the slowest protocol device you have connected.

If you want Wi-Fi in your home via a wireless router, you may need a high-speed Internet connection. Check with your local telephone or cable company for service availability in your area. Once you have an Internet account, you will be given a modem, which delivers the Internet connection from your wired cable to your router.

To be able to connect to Wi-Fi on your laptop, it must have wireless Internet capabilities. Most new laptops will come with a built-in Wi-Fi card that will

automatically search for available Wi-Fi hot-spots (places where Wi-Fi is available). If your laptop does not have a built-in Wi-Fi card, you can purchase a wireless network card. Some cards will need to be installed internally (check with your local CE retailer for installation information), while others slip into the PCMCIA or ExpressCard slot.

Like wireless routers, wireless cards support IEEE 802.11 standards. Most come with 802.11g or Draft N capabilities. MIMO (Multiple Input, Multiple Output) technology is another feature that some routers and wireless cards offer. MIMO uses multiple antennas to both send and receive information, making

data transfers quicker than cards that don't have MIMO technology. MIMO technology is also available on PCMCIA cards.

### Set Yourself Free

Once you have all the right tools, you can start surfing the 'Net wirelessly. Before you run to your nearest coffee shop to hop on the wireless Internet, note that some businesses will make you pay a small fee for Wi-Fi. If you don't want to pay to use Wi-Fi, do your homework and find a hotspot where you can roam free (literally). **FG**

BY TESSA BRENNEMAN

# The Lowdown On 802.11n

## The Latest Generation Of Wireless

**W**hile shopping for wireless networking equipment, such as a router or a network adapter, you'll find many wireless devices that are "draft 802.11n compliant." 802.11n is the most recent wireless standard, promising greater speed and range than current 802.11a/b/g standards, but the IEEE has yet to finalize the 802.11n specifications.

Products labeled as "Draft N" can send and receive data near 802.11n speeds, but it's possible that the devices won't be compatible with the final 802.11n standard. We'll indicate what Draft N currently offers and what kind of compatibility you can expect, and we'll show you what to look for when buying 802.11n products.

Currently, 802.11a and 802.11g standards offer a transfer rate of up to

54Mbps, which is fine if you want to migrate data between your network devices. But if you try to stream media from room to room, 802.11a or 802.11g products may not offer enough bandwidth, resulting in choppy sound or video.

Generally, Draft N devices feature a peak data rate of 300Mbps, which is comparable to the rate you can send and receive data over a wired connection, making it ideal for streaming music, photos, and standard- or high-definition video. Additionally, many Draft N routers feature MIMO (Multiple In/Multiple Out) technology to improve signal range through the use of multiple antennas, resulting in fewer poor or dead signal areas in your home.

Draft N products are based on the most current IEEE 802.11n specifications, and most experts don't expect the final 802.11n standard to be much different from Draft N, so it's likely—but not guaranteed—that Draft N devices will use technology that's firmware upgradeable (a downloadable update from the manufacturer) to the final 802.11n standard.

However, you may have to wait awhile for 802.11n to be finalized; according to the latest IEEE 802.11 Project Timeline, final approval isn't slated until March of this year.

### Bands & Speeds

**8**02.11a uses the 5GHz frequency band (less interference but shorter range), while 802.11b and 802.11g use the 2.4GHz band (more interference but longer range). 802.11n products may be able to use both the 2.4GHz and 5GHz band.

Wi-Fi Standard	Data Transfer Rate
802.11a	54Mbps
802.11b	11Mbps
802.11g	54Mbps
802.11n (Draft N)	300Mbps



Remember, when shopping for a Draft N router or network adapter, you will want to make certain it's backward-compatible, meaning it'll work with devices that support the older 802.11 standards, or you may not be able to send or receive data from older wireless devices.

If you're concerned about compatibility, look for Draft N products with a "Wi-Fi CERTIFIED" logo, which means the equipment has been tested by the Wi-Fi Alliance to work with other certified devices. **FG**

BY NATHAN LAKE

# Essential THINGS TO KNOW

## Media Center PCs

### Benefits

**Q** Will I need to pay a monthly bill to record programs on my media center PC?

**A** No, you won't have to worry about payment when you use a TV tuner with your PC.

**Q** How is my entertainment experience enhanced with a media center PC?

**A** A computer designed for multimedia purposes will let you play DVDs, stream live media, view photos, record (and watch) TV, listen to the radio, and much more.

**Q** Will I be able to watch programs on my PC while sitting at a distance on my couch?

**A** Yes. Because media center programs will display shows on an interface similar to your TV's, you will be able to easily view your monitor from a standard 10- to 15-foot range.

**Q** Can I use my PC's hard drive to store TV programs?

**A** Yes. Your hard drive lets you record and archive shows, functioning in a similar way as a DVR.

### Components

**Q** What function does a media center PC's TV tuner serve?

**A** A TV tuner captures a TV signal from a cable, satellite, or OTA (over-the-air) source to let you play, record, pause, or rewind live TV and schedule recordings.

**Q** What variations of TV tuners are there?

**A** Choices include internal cards that fit into a motherboard PCI (Peripheral Component Interconnect) or PCI-E (PCI Express) slot and external USB and FireWire tuners.

**Q** Can a TV tuner record two programs simultaneously?

**A** Although more expensive, tuners with multiple tuner chips can record multiple programs simultaneously.

**Q** Can a notebook function as a media center PC?

**A** Yes. USB tuners that deliver OTA signals are especially handy for notebook use, due to both devices' portability.



## Storage

**Q** How much storage do I need for a media center PC?

**A** Considering you'll be storing lots of video and music on this computer, you should buy the biggest hard drive you can—from 500GB to 1TB.

**Q** What's the difference between a 4,500rpm hard drive and one rated at 7,500rpm?

**A** Rpm (revolutions per minute) is a measurement of how fast the platter inside the hard drive spins. The higher the number, the faster it is, and the faster it can perform read and write functions.

**Q** Is a faster hard drive best for a media center PC?

**A** Generally, a faster hard drive will be noisier than a slower one, so you may need to sacrifice speed for quietness (or vice versa) unless you have a fast hard drive with noise-reducing technology.

**Q** Can I leverage other media devices to supplement my PC's hard drive?

**A** Yes. In addition to using the media center PC's hard drive, you can also stream audio and video from other devices with their own storage, such as a Microsoft Xbox 360.

**Q** What other storage options do I have?

**A** If you need increased storage capacity, you can always purchase additional hard drives and install them in your media center PC.

## Setup

**Q** How does my media center PC connect to my TV and audio receiver?

**A** If your PC offers an HDMI output, you can use it to send video and audio to your TV or receiver. Otherwise, you'll need to run separate audio and video cables from your PC.

**Q** I want to record and watch live TV on my media center PC. How do I connect my cable or over-the-air TV signal to the PC?

**A** Media center PCs feature a TV tuner card with a coaxial input to receive analog and digital TV. You'll need to run coaxial cable from your cable box or antenna to the coaxial port on the TV tuner card.

**Q** What application can I use to view and listen to content on my media center PC?

**A** The Home Premium and Ultimate versions of Windows Vista include Windows Media Center to provide a way to watch and record TV, view photos, stream music, and view online multimedia content.

**Q** How do I access the Internet on my media center PC?

**A** Assuming the media center PC has a wired Ethernet port or Wi-Fi capabilities, you can connect to the Internet the same way you do with a typical PC.

**Q** Can I control the media center PC from my viewing position?

**A** Yes, but you'll need a wireless keyboard or a remote control, typically included with the media center PC, to operate the computer from a distance.



# Send In The Geeks!

## Say Goodbye To Slow Computers

### Geek Squad PC Optimization, Explained

Whether your computer is fresh out of the box or has been used for a long time, there's a good chance it isn't running at peak performance. In order to protect your privacy and avoid PC slowdowns, everything from needless software to malware, such as viruses and spyware, needs to be cleaned out on a regular basis. However, tracking these nuisances down and knowing what you should keep vs. what you should delete can quickly become a nightmare.

Enter Geek Squad. Whether you opt for its in-home, in-store, or online service, Geek Squad Agents can optimize your PC so it boots faster, runs better, and suffers from fewer errors and crashes. Here's an overview of the basic PC adjustments Geek Squad can perform and why they are so vital.

### Remove Unnecessary Startup Programs

If programs are flagged to open and run in the background as soon as Windows loads, they lengthen boot times and slow down your system's overall performance. Windows does include tools to help you remove startup items, but there are several caveats. These simple utilities don't necessarily show you everything that loads when your computer starts up, and they don't provide enough information to let you know which programs are necessary and which can safely be deleted. With the assistance of Geek Squad Agents, your PC's needless startup

programs will be identified and then safely removed.

### Fight Malware

Nothing drags down performance like malware. Viruses can take over your computer to send unsolicited emails or destroy your PC's data, and spyware monitors your actions, leading to identity theft and other security breaches. One of the most important components to some of Geek Squad's security services is antivirus and antispyware installation and configuration that prevents existing and new malware from infecting your computer.

### Take Out The Trash

As you use your computer, it creates loads of temporary files that eat up hard drive space and serve no lasting purpose. As with startup programs, it's difficult to tell which files are safe to delete and which are needed, so let a Geek Squad Agent take the guesswork out of this tune-up task.

### Keep It Updated

New security holes for Windows and other software crop up regularly, and new antivirus and anti-malware definitions are released nearly every day. It is imperative to keep your OS and anti-malware software up-to-date. Many Geek Squad optimization services can patch your software programs with new updates so that you can keep your data and identity safe with peace of mind. **FG**

BY TRACY BAKER

### Which Computer Service Is Right For You?

Geek Squad offers a variety of PC packages that include optimization services. Here's a breakdown of some of them:

#### Standard Security & Performance

\$229.99 (in-home)

\$129.99 (in-store)

**What's included:** Antivirus and antispyware software is installed, and all performance tweaks discussed in this article are performed.

#### Computer Optimization

\$129.99 (in-home)

\$39.99 (in-store)

**What's included:** Temp file cleaning, startup program removal, and software updates.

#### Standard Gamer's Optimization

\$69.99 (in-store only)

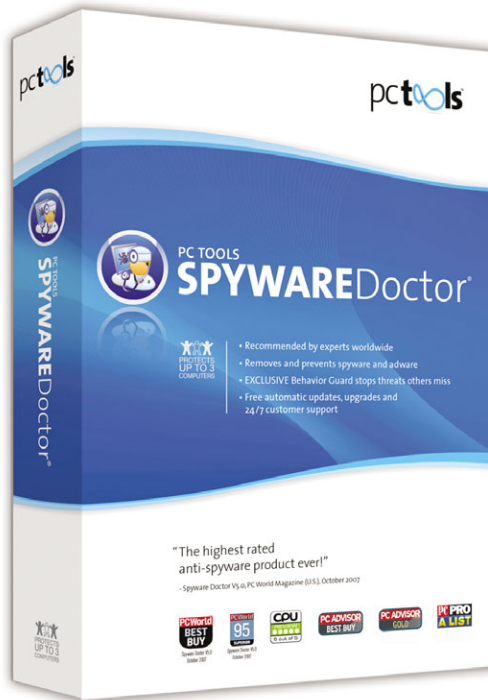
**What's included:** Install one program, temp file cleaning, startup program removal, software updates, and optimize requested game settings.

#### Computer Checkup

\$99.99 (in-store only)

**What's included:** Troubleshoot problems, startup program removal, software updates, and OS critical updates.

# Internet Security & Monitoring Protection You Can Trust



## PC Tools Spyware Doctor®

MSRP: \$29.95

SKU: 8988232

[www.pctools.com](http://www.pctools.com)

### Quick Overview

Security software is an absolute necessity for anyone who's on the Internet. Malicious programs such as spyware, adware, and viruses put your computer and your identity at risk every day. By using PC Tools Spyware Doctor, you can be confident that you have the most advanced threat protection, recommended by computer and security experts globally and trusted by millions of users every day.

### Perfect For

Spyware Doctor is for those who want to keep their computers free of malware with an easy-to-use interface and award-winning technology.

### Outstanding Benefits

- Award-winning software recommended by experts worldwide
- Prevents malicious programs from stealing personal information, degrading system performance, and damaging your important files
- Frequent automatic updates ensure your protection is up-to-date
- Built-in behavioral technology automatically keeps you safe from the newest online threats
- IntelliGuard® real-time protection blocks threats before they harm the PC
- Easy to install and use with immediate automatic protection
- Free 24/7 phone support for all customers

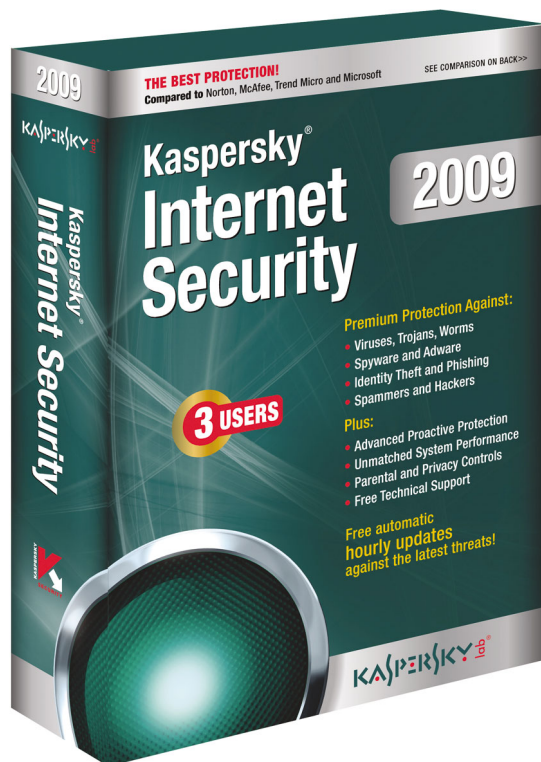
### Coollest Feature

Currently recognized by industry experts as the best product available to remove spyware and keep it off your system while still being one of the easiest to use.



# Internet Security & Monitoring

## The New Standard In Internet Security



### Kaspersky® Internet Security

MSRP: \$79.95

SKU: 8940774

[www.kaspersky.com](http://www.kaspersky.com)

### Quick Overview

Kaspersky® Internet Security—Complete Internet security protection with anti-virus, anti-spyware, anti-phishing, anti-spam and anti-hacker technologies. Plus parental controls and virtual keyboard.

### Perfect For

Kaspersky Internet Security offers comprehensive protection for home and small office users. Browse the Web, send and receive email, shop and bank online, and exchange instant messages.

### Outstanding Benefits

- Premium protection against viruses, Trojans and worms, spyware and adware, identity theft and phishing, spammers and hackers
- Advanced proactive protection
- Unmatched system performance
- Parental controls, privacy controls, and virtual keyboard
- Automatic hourly updates
- Free technical support

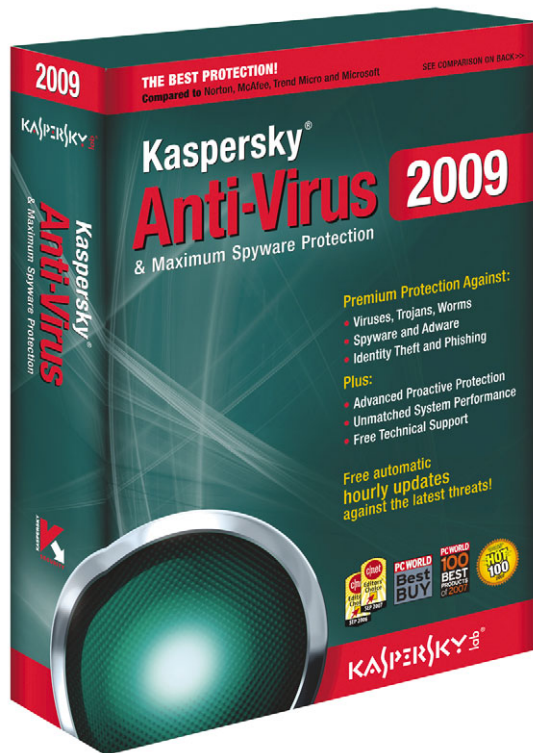
### Cooler Feature

Kaspersky **virtual keyboard** prevents cybercriminals from stealing your password, banking information, and credit card numbers because mouse clicks cannot be recorded or traced.



# Anti-Virus Software

## Robust Spyware Protection



### Kaspersky® Anti-Virus 2009

MSRP: \$59.95

SKU: 8940792

[www.kaspersky.com](http://www.kaspersky.com)

### Quick Overview

Kaspersky® Anti-Virus offers the most advanced anti-virus software with maximum spyware protection. This latest version of our software represents a breakthrough in the way we protect our customers with the strongest, most efficient anti-malware technology available today.

### Perfect For

Kaspersky Anti-Virus is the optimal protection for home and small office users. Browse Web pages, send and receive email, shop and bank online, and exchange instant messages.

### Outstanding Benefits

- Premium protection against viruses, Trojans and worms, spyware and adware, identity theft, and phishing attacks
- Advanced proactive protection
- Unmatched system performance
- Automatic hourly updates
- Fastest response to new threats
- Free technical support

### Cooler Feature

Kaspersky Anti-Virus is the new standard in Internet security! Now up to **7 times faster**, it offers premium protection that lets you make the most of your computer's performance.



# Multimedia Software

## Create, Preserve & Share The Stories Of Your Life



Roxio Creator™ 2009

MSRP: \$99.99

SKU: 8988278

[www.roxio.com](http://www.roxio.com)

### Quick Overview

Roxio Creator 2009 is a complete multimedia suite for all your video, photo, music, data, burning, and sharing needs. Creator makes it easy for family members of every age and experience level to transform photos and video from digital cameras, camcorders, and camera phones into awesome multimedia stories to share with family and friends—safely online on a private Roxio Web page and on DVD or Blu-ray Disc.

### Perfect For

All family members and digital media enthusiasts alike.

### Outstanding Benefits

- Creator's sleek new design delivers the right tools and helpful tips at your fingertips
- Keep your precious memories safe with the industry's best burning and copying tools
- Edit movies automatically or with timeline precision and burn DVDs or Blu-ray Discs like a pro
- Make the most of your music with hot playlists for any occasion—even convert CD audiobooks for iPod playback
- Create instant online photo slideshows on a private, secure Web page

### Coollest Feature

Capture HD video, including AVCHD with the optional HD/Blu-ray Disc Plug-in and burn it to Blu-ray Discs. Burn HD video on standard DVDs for playback on your PlayStation 3 or other Blu-ray player.



# Tax Preparation Software

## Get Your Biggest Tax Refund



### TurboTax Deluxe

MSRP: \$59.95

SKU: 9069287

[www.turbotax.com](http://www.turbotax.com)

### Quick Overview

TurboTax, the nation's No. 1-rated, best-selling tax preparation software, makes it easier than ever to get the biggest refund possible. The average TurboTax® customer receives a federal tax refund of more than \$2,600. That's \$200 more than taxpayers using other tax preparation methods. At a time when every dollar counts, who wouldn't want an extra \$200 in their pockets?

### Perfect For

TurboTax Deluxe is great for the majority of taxpayers, whether they have simple returns or have more complex taxes; including home mortgage, charitable donations, or medical expenses.

### Outstanding Benefits

- Guides taxpayers through changes in their lives such as a new job or buying or selling a home, and lets them know how those changes impact their taxes
- Get live answers instantly from TurboTax tax experts and other TurboTax users online in the TurboTax Live Community
- The Audit Risk Meter identifies common audit triggers—like a home office and rental property—and provides actionable guidance to help reduce taxpayers' audit risk before they file
- Includes ItsDeductible, which provides the fair market value of more than 1,000 commonly donated items so taxpayers can get the maximum deduction that meets IRS guidelines

### Coollest Feature

**The Biggest Refund Guaranteed.** Walks taxpayers over 350 deductions including mortgage interest, charitable contributions, education and medical expenses, getting them the biggest refund possible.



# Notebook

## The Features You've Asked For



HP Pavilion dv3510nr

MSRP: \$1,199.99

SKU: 9027714

[www.hp.com](http://www.hp.com)

### Quick Overview

Expanding on the sophisticated elegance of the current line, the new dv series notebook is defined by fluid, modern lines with surprising innovations inside and out. This streamlined and thin notebook is enhanced with a color-matched keyboard and touchpad. And, as a part of Best Buy's Blue Label line, it was fashioned together with additional features you've asked for.

### Perfect For

For those who want the latest technologies in a stunning design that truly reflects today's need for mobile computing day or night.

### Outstanding Benefits

- A Best Buy Blue Label notebook, which was created based upon customer feedback
- Keep going even after dark with the backlit keyboard
- Protect your PC with a full year of Norton Internet Security™ 2008
- Get better energy efficiency and less weight with a 13.3-inch diagonal HP BrightView LED
- Chat face-to-face or capture video clips using the HP Webcam and integrated microphone
- Work and play longer with up to four hours of battery life
- Windows Vista® Home Premium operating system

### Coollest Feature

This Blue Label notebook was developed as a joint venture between Best Buy and HP to address what customers want in a mobile computer.

**EPSON®**

# All-In-One Ink Jet 5-in-1 With Wi-Fi®: Print/Copy/Scan/Photo/Fax



Epson WorkForce™  
600

MSRP: \$199.99

SKU: 8948909

[www.epson.com](http://www.epson.com)

## Quick Overview

Meet the new WorkForce™ 600 from Epson. Designed with your small business needs in mind, the WorkForce 600 is a Wi-Fi®-enabled all-in-one printer that takes your presentations, marketing materials, documents, and more to the next level. With print speeds up to 38 pages per minute and laser-quality documents about 2x faster than the competition, this ink jet is ready to help you accelerate your business. Get ready for takeoff.

## Perfect For

Small business owners looking for a super-charged all-in-one printer to make their business look its best.

## Outstanding Benefits

- Draft speeds up to 38 ppm (black and color)\*
- Laser-quality documents about 2x faster than the competition\*
- Wi-Fi® and Ethernet networking built in
- Uses up to 3x less power than a laser printer\*
- Extra high-capacity black ink cartridge
- Smudge, fade, and water resistant, highlighter friendly
- Built-in memory card slots and 2.5-inch LCD
- Fax and 30-page Auto Document Feeder
- Two-year limited warranty with registration









## Coollest Feature

Engineered for business, this Wi-Fi®-enabled all-in-one can send faxes in as little as 3 seconds per page and even faxes in color and legal size. Software is included to help create flyers, brochures, and other business documents.

\* See Epson.com for details

## Which Notebook Computer Is Best For You?



A notebook computer is a pretty big purchase for most people, and it's usually a bit overwhelming, too. This chart compares the features and specs from several different types of notebook models.

		Operating system	Processor	Hard drive size; RAM	Screen size	Dimensions; Weight	Optical drives; Media card reader
What It Means		The software (usually Windows or Mac OS X) that controls your computer	Chip that controls the computer (typically, a bigger number is better)	How much data the computer can hold; Memory that's read and written to	The diagonal measurement of the notebook's screen	Height x width x depth; How much the laptop weighs	Drives that can read and write discs; Slots that read media cards without a separate peripheral
       	<b>MSI Wind Netbook</b> MSRP: \$399.99* SKU 9078534	Windows XP Home	1.6GHz Intel Atom	120GB; 1GB	10 inches	0.748x10.23x7.08 inches; 2.3 pounds	No; No
	<b>Asus Eee PC 900 BK039X</b> MSRP: \$449.99* SKU 8905973	Windows XP Home	900MHz Intel Celeron	16GB; 1GB DDR2	8.9 inches	1.3x8.9x6.7 inches; 2.2 pounds	No; Yes
	<b>Compaq Presario CQ50-215NR</b> MSRP: \$549.99* SKU 9027698	Windows Vista Home Premium	1.9GHz AMD Athlon X2	160GB; 2GB DDR2	15.4 inches	1.7x14.1x10.2 inches; 6.4 pounds	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW; No
	<b>Acer Extensa EX4630-4791</b> MSRP: \$649.99* SKU 9097121	Windows Vista Home Premium	2GHz Intel Premium Dual-Core	250GB; 3GB	14.1 inches	1.6x13.3x9.2 inches; 5.2 pounds	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW; Yes
	<b>HP Pavilion dv3510nr</b> MSRP: \$1,199.99* SKU 9027714	Windows Vista Home Premium	2.26GHz Intel Core 2 Duo Mobile	320GB; 4GB	14.1 inches	1.2x13.4x9.7 inches; 5 pounds	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW; Yes
	<b>Toshiba E105-S1402</b> MSRP: \$1,199.99* SKU 9022979	Windows Vista Home Premium	2.26GHz Intel Core 2 Duo Mobile	320GB; 4GB	14.1 inches	1.2x13.4x9.7 inches; 5 pounds	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW; Yes
	<b>Apple MacBook MB467LL/A</b> MSRP: \$1,599* SKU 9107432	Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard	2.4GHz Intel Core 2 Duo	250GB; 2GB DDR3	13.3 inches	0.95x12.78x8.94 inches; 4.5 pounds	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW; No
	<b>Sony Vaio VGN-FW298Y/H</b> MSRP: \$1,999.99* SKU 9047006	Windows Vista Home Premium	2.53GHz Intel Core 2 Duo	320GB; 4GB DDR2	16.4 inches	1.46x15.1x10.3 inches; 6.47 pounds	DVD-RW, BD-RW, or BD combo drive; Yes

\*Prices listed in this issue are for general reference and may vary from retailer pricing.

## Which Desktop PC Is Right For You?

When you shop for a desktop PC, you'll see lots of similar deals. The comparison chart below shows how subtle—yet important—the differences can be. If you need further help discerning the differences between these desktops, we suggest you consult an associate at your local CE retailer.

		Processor	Hard drive size; RAM	Optical drives	Operating system	Graphics card	Ports
	<b>What It Means</b>	Chip that controls the computer (typically, a bigger number is better)	How much data the computer can hold; Memory that's read and written to	Drives that can read and write CD-Rs, DVD-RWs, or HD discs	The software (usually Windows or Mac OS X) that controls your computer	Controls the quality of your video and images	Sockets that give your computer access to different peripherals
	<b>eMachines ET1161-03</b> MSRP: \$399.99* SKU 9077946	2.3GHz AMD Athlon X2	320GB; 3GB	Double-layer DVD±RW/C D-RW	Windows Vista Home Premium	Nvidia GeForce 6150SE	6 USB
	<b>Acer AX3200-U3600A</b> MSRP: \$479.99* SKU 9026957	2.1GHz AMD Phenom X3	320GB; 4GB	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW	Windows Vista Home Premium	Nvidia GeForce 8400	9 USB; 1 FireWire; 1 eSATA; 1 HDMI
	<b>Gateway DX4720-03</b> MSRP: \$509.99* SKU 9032352	2.5GHz Intel Pentium Dual-Core	640GB; 4GB	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW	Windows Vista Home Premium	Nvidia GeForce 7100	6 USB; 2 FireWire
	<b>Dell Hybrid-118B</b> MSRP: \$749.99* SKU 8977823	2.16GHz Intel Core Duo	250GB; 3GB	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW	Windows Vista Home Premium	Intel Graphics Media Accelerator X3100	6 USB; 1 FireWire
	<b>Dell SMT-117B</b> MSRP: \$899.99* SKU 9017093	2.33GHz Intel Core 2 Quad	1.2TB; 8GB	DVD-RW/CD-RW	Windows Vista Home Premium	ATI Radeon 3450	10 USB; 2 FireWire
	<b>HP TouchSmart IQ506</b> MSRP: \$1,499.99* SKU 8883292	2.16GHz Intel Core Duo	500GB; 4GB	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW	Windows Vista Home Premium	Nvidia GeForce 9300 M GS HD	5 USB; 1 FireWire
	<b>Apple MB325LL/A</b> MSRP: \$1,799* SKU 8844726	2.8GHz Intel Core 2 Duo	320GB; 2GB	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW	Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard	ATI Radeon HD 2600 Pro	5 USB; 2 FireWire
	<b>Velocity Micro Edge E2250</b> MSRP: \$1,999.99* SKU 8782169	2.66GHz Intel Core 2 Quad	750GB; 4GB	Double-layer DVD±RW/CD-RW/DVD-ROM	Windows Vista Home Premium	Nvidia EVGA GeForce 9800 GTX	6 USB; 2 FireWire; 1 S-Video; 2 DVI

\*Prices listed in this issue are for general reference and may vary from retailer pricing.

## Software Listings

Get More Out Of Your PC

Computers can be used to create greeting cards, play games, balance your checkbook, and more. The thing is, most of these functions aren't available straight out of the box. To fully harness your computer's potential, you'll need to buy software. Here are some options.

### Art/Illustration/Graphics



**Corel Paint Shop Pro Photo X2 Ultimate**  
\$99.99\*  
www.corel.com

Professional photo-editing software in an easy-to-use package. The Ultimate version also comes with a bonus pack loaded with free extras.



**Adobe Photoshop Elements 7**  
\$99.99\*  
www.adobe.com

Photoshop Elements 7 from Adobe makes it easy to fix red-eye, combine photos for the perfect group shot, or tweak the color balance to make your photos look their best.



**Roxio Creator 2009**  
\$99.99\*  
www.roxio.com

See p. 58

With Roxio's new Creator 2009, preserving your memories has become simpler than ever. You can now easily edit and touch up your photos, create unique DVDs using your home movies, and organize your music collection.



**Broderbund The Print Shop 22 Deluxe**  
\$49.99\*  
www.broderbund.com

Easily create banners, business cards, letterheads, calendars, photo greeting cards, invitations, and more right from your computer with The Print Shop 22 Deluxe from Broderbund.

### Audio/Video



**Pinnacle Studio Ultimate Version 12**  
\$129.99\*  
www.pinnaclesys.com

Use automated and powerful video- and audio-editing tools to create and share your home movies.



**Apple iLife '08**  
\$79\*  
www.apple.com

Use Apple's popular iPhoto, iWeb, GarageBand, and iDVD on your Mac to organize photos, create a Web site, record music, or edit movies.



**Magix Music Maker 14**  
\$59.99\*  
www.magix.com

Produce your own music using more than 1,500 sounds, virtual instruments, and power chords. When you're done, use Music Maker 14 to create a music video.



**Cakewalk Music Creator 4**  
\$39\*  
www.cakewalk.com

Record, edit, and mix all kinds of instrumental and vocal music with this music composition program from Cakewalk.

### Business Applications



**Microsoft Office Standard 2007**  
\$399.95\*  
www.microsoft.com

Use all of today's most popular business office applications, including Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, and Word.



**Adobe Acrobat 8 Standard**  
\$299\*  
www.adobe.com

Easily create, combine, and manage various PDF documents for your personal or business needs.



**Intuit Quicken Home & Business 2008**  
\$99.99\*  
www.intuit.com

Manage your money and see where you stand financially with Quicken's newly redesigned Business Center.

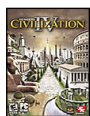


**Smith Micro Software VMware Fusion**  
\$79.99\*  
www.vmware.com

This program lets you run Windows applications on your Intel-based Mac for greater freedom and productivity.

\*Prices listed in this issue are for general reference and may vary from retailer pricing.

## Games/ Entertainment



**2K Games**  
**Sid Meier's**  
**Civilization IV**  
\$29.99\*

[www.2kgames.com](http://www.2kgames.com)

*This addictive strategy game has a multiplayer mode for additional ways to compete against your friends.*



**Got Game**  
**Entertainment**  
**Arctic Stud**  
**Poker Run**

\$19.99\*

[www.gotgameentertainment.com](http://www.gotgameentertainment.com)

*This game combines the strategy of poker, the thrill of racing, and the explosions of combat in Tournament Elimination, single-player, or multiplayer modes.*



**MumboJumbo**  
**Polar**  
**Games**  
\$19.99\*

[www.mumbojumbo.com](http://www.mumbojumbo.com)

*In this safe-for-the-whole-family game, four players can compete to see who's the best bowler or golfer.*



**SouthPeak**  
**Games**  
**Dream**  
**Pinball 3D**

\$19.99\*

[www.southpeakgames.com](http://www.southpeakgames.com)

*Play pinball on your computer with six table themes, several ball options, multiball power-ups, and intense visuals and ball physics.*

## Home Productivity



**Nuance Dragon**  
**NaturallySpeaking**  
**10 Preferred**  
\$199.99\*

[www.nuance.com](http://www.nuance.com)

*Dictate emails, reports, and other documents much faster than you can type and let Dragon NaturallySpeaking do the typing for you.*



**Susteen DataPilot**  
**Universal Kit w/**  
**Bluetooth**  
\$69.95\*

[www.susteen.com](http://www.susteen.com)

*Connect your cell phone to your computer or Bluetooth adapter to back up your phone's address book, synchronize your phone book and calendar with Outlook, or use your phone as a wireless modem for your laptop computer.*



**Intuit**  
**TurboTax**  
**Deluxe Federal +**  
**State**

\$59.95\*

[www.intuit.com](http://www.intuit.com)

*Simplify doing your taxes this year with TurboTax Deluxe. Customized questions guide you through the process with ease.*



**Microsoft**  
**Streets &**  
**Trips 2008**  
\$39.95\*

[www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

*Plan your next vacation and share your travel plans with friends who will be joining you along the journey.*

## Networking & Communications



**Kaspersky**  
**Labs Internet**  
**Security**  
**2009**

\$79.95\*

[www.kaspersky.com](http://www.kaspersky.com)

*Premium protection that's updated hourly to keep your system safe from even the most recent threats.*



**Kaspersky**  
**Labs**  
**Anti-Virus 2009**  
\$59.99\*

[www.kaspersky.com](http://www.kaspersky.com)

*Kaspersky's newly updated Anti-Virus 2009 has added an advanced antivirus engine that increases scan times, giving you even better protection against viruses, Trojans, worms, spyware, adware, and more.*



**Webroot Software**  
**Spy Sweeper With**  
**AntiVirus**  
\$49.99\*

[www.webroot.com](http://www.webroot.com)

*Protect up to three computers from viruses and spyware. Spy Sweeper stops both known and potential threats by blocking suspicious activity.*



**PC Tools**  
**Spyware Doctor 6**  
\$29.95\*

[www.pctools.com](http://www.pctools.com)

*Surf the Internet with confidence knowing that Spyware Doctor's advanced updating system will prevent both known and emerging spyware threats from reaching your PC.*

## System Utilities



**Symantec**  
**Norton Ghost**  
**14.0**  
\$69.99\*

[www.symantec.com](http://www.symantec.com)

*Back up your entire computer or select specific files for backup to ensure you're able to recover from any unforeseen events, such as a crash or virus attack.*



**iolo System**  
**Mechanic**  
**Professional**  
\$69.95\*

[www.iolo.com](http://www.iolo.com)

*With System Mechanic, you can find and fix errors and fragmentation on your PC, clean out clutter, and optimize your system for best performance.*



**GuardID**  
**Systems**  
**ID Vault**  
\$49.99\*

[www.guardid.com](http://www.guardid.com)

*Although it looks like a USB flash drive, ID Vault safely stores login and password information to keep your information safe from keyloggers and phishing scams.*



**White**  
**Canyon**  
**WipeDrive 5**  
\$39.95\*

[www.whitecanyon.com](http://www.whitecanyon.com)

*When it's time to dispose of your old computer, use White Canyon's WipeDrive to ensure that all traces of your personal information are completely removed.*

# Notebooks

## 5 Must-Have Accessories

A laptop is a big investment, and now that you've taken the plunge, it's time to decide what you need to go along with your shiny new purchase. We've rounded up five of our favorite accessories that every laptop owner should add to her shopping list. **PC**

BY JOY MARTIN

**1** Laptops aren't cheap, so you'll want to protect yours. After splurging on a laptop, the first thing you need to consider is how you're going to protect it. You bought a laptop for its portability, so it's important to buy a good case that can protect it and keep it mobile. Cases are available in a multitude of styles and colors, so you're sure to find one that meets your needs. We especially like laptop bags with wheels and telescoping handles because they're so handy when you are traveling. Look for a bag that is built for your screen size and has plenty of zippered pockets to store your notebook accessories and paperwork.



**2** A mouse is easier to work with than a pointing stick. Although laptops are well-suited for working on the go, the touchpad and/or pointing stick (that little nub in the middle of the keyboard that enables you to navigate the on-screen pointer) that replace your desktop computer's mouse can be hard to manipulate. If you prefer a mouse, look for a wired mouse that plugs into your USB port or even a cordless mouse. The sleek design of cordless mice makes them easy to transport, and the USB receivers are small enough to leave plugged in, so your mouse will always be ready when you need it.



**3** Surge protectors designed for laptops will offer your notebook PC some much-needed protection from spikes in power. You didn't have to think twice before plugging your desktop computer into a power conditioner or surge protector. But do you take the same precautions every time you use your laptop—no matter where you happen to be? Surge protectors ensure that the electrical current running to the device(s) attached to it doesn't exceed acceptable levels, which can cause serious damage. In fact, a sudden spike in electricity can destroy a laptop, so taking the time to plug into one every time is worth the few seconds it takes. For convenient protection on the go, surge protectors designed specifically for laptops are compact, making them easy to pack away in your laptop bag.



**4** Portable USB hubs let you connect a few extra peripherals while you're out of the office. USB ports let you connect all sorts of electronic goodies to your computer, but what if you have more gadgets than ports? A USB hub, such as Dynex's 4-Port USB 2.0 Hub (\$29.99; [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)), is an affordable way to ensure you can connect all of your peripherals. In addition to giving you more ports, cords to items such as a digital camera or music player can be left plugged in on your desk, so they are ready to go next time you use your laptop.



**5** An extra battery lets you keep working on the road when you're far away from your recharger.

We love laptops for their portability—they let us work without being tethered to a desk. But that flexibility is limited to how long the battery holds a charge. Having an extra battery on hand that's powered and ready to go gives you the ability to work longer, without having to find a power outlet. Batteries vary from laptop to laptop, but with your model number in hand, you can find a replacement for any brand.



# Gaming Services

## Geek Squad Helps You Get In The Game



ou want your new game console or PC to be ready for jamming on your favorite instrument, attacking aliens in space, or leading your fellow soldiers

through enemy territory, without having to spend time configuring system settings or a wireless home network. A Geek Squad Agent can take care of the details by setting up parental controls, creating an online user account, adding system memory, and more, leaving you time to round up your friends, family, and plenty of snacks for your gaming debut.

### Available Gaming Services

**G**eek Squad offers plenty of ways to help you stay focused on the game. Below are the gaming services you can take advantage of.

#### In-Store Services

Gaming Customization & Setup: \$29.99  
 Gaming Data Transfer: \$49.99  
 Advanced Gamers Optimization: \$159.99  
 Standard Gamers Optimization: \$69.99  
 Hardware Install: \$49.99  
 Software Install: \$29.99

#### In-Home Services

In-Home Gaming Setup & Network: \$129.99  
 Gaming Network Installation: \$169.99  
 Whole Home Network Installation: \$349.99

### Console Gaming Services

Many of Geek Squad's gaming services are tailored specifically for console gamers. For example, with Gaming Customization and Setup, a Geek Squad Agent will configure your system with select parental controls and install the latest updates. Geek Squad can even customize an online user account with a username, password, and preferences for the times you connect your console to the Internet. Another service, called Gaming Data Transfer, ensures that you'll have plenty of hard drive space on your new PlayStation 3 or Xbox 360 by upgrading the system to a 160GB, 250GB, or 320GB hard drive. And if you'd like to upgrade the hard drive in your existing console, they'll also transfer all your data to the new drive. Other console gaming services include Gaming Console Setup and

Networking, where a Geek Squad Agent will come to your home to connect and configure your console to an existing home network. If you don't already have a Wi-Fi network set up, Geek Squad Agents can tackle this task, too, with their Gaming Network Installation. An Agent will set up a router and encrypt the new network to keep it secure from Internet thieves and potential attacks. The Agent will also connect a Linksys Dual-Band Wireless N Gaming Adapter to your console, alleviating Internet lag and sluggish gameplay.

### PC Gaming Services

Geek Squad also offers services for PC gamers. When you choose the Advanced Gamers Optimization, a Geek Squad Agent will upgrade two hardware

components, such as a graphics card, power supply, or additional memory (which is also known as RAM), and update the new hardware's drivers. This will ensure that your PC performs faster, making it better-suited for graphics-heavy online games. With this service, the Agent will also install one software title, enable your computer's security functions for safe online gameplay, remove unneeded trialware that may slow down your computer, and download system updates to ensure your computer is performing at its best. Another PC gaming service, called the Standard Gamers Optimization, offers all the same features as the Advanced Optimization, except you are limited to the installation of only one hardware upgrade. **EG**

BY KRIS GLASER



# CE Retailers' Mobile Services

## One-Stop Convenience

**I**f you've wandered the aisles of your favorite CE retailer, you've likely seen a wireless kiosk or two. What you may not realize is these "stores within a store" can provide many benefits beyond visiting a traditional cell phone carrier's store. Here's a closer look at the mobile services you'll find at CE retailers.

### Many Plan Options

In many cases, mobile stores within a CE retailer's store offer services from multiple carriers. This makes it easy for you to directly compare one carrier's plans to another's. On the flip side, if you were at one carrier's wireless store, it'd be highly unlikely that you could get straightforward facts about how its services and plans compare to another carrier. With in-store mobile services from a variety of carriers, you'll get all the facts in one location.

### One-Stop Shop

For many of us, it seems that there is never enough time to get everything

done. Because CE retailers frequently offer accessories for all types of phones, you can get everything you need for your new phone—including a memory card, Bluetooth headset, and case—without having to visit another store.

### Handheld Comparison

Each carrier offers its own set of handsets to be used on its network. If you're

trying to choose between two phones, you'll be able to compare them side-by-side, pick them up, and interact with them in a mobile store. In addition, you will be able to compare handsets from various carriers. When upgrading phones, many wireless stores can also help transfer your address book from your old phone. **FG**

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON

## Mobile Service Offerings

**B**est Buy has rolled out Best Buy Mobile. This joint venture with Carphone Warehouse aims to provide a better mobile phone shopping experience. In addition to many of the benefits listed above, Best Buy Mobile can provide customers with impartial, in-depth information for about eight to 10 carriers and help customers find a carrier that'll best suit their needs. These mobile phone specialists are noncommissioned, so you know you'll get honest input. In addition, Best Buy Mobile's phone experts can help explain the various technologies and services that are available today and show you how those services can fit into your lifestyle.

All of us want to get a good deal without a lot of hassle. Prices for phones through Best Buy Mobile are clearly marked, and you won't have to deal with rebates. Should something go wrong with your phone, Best Buy can provide repair services and loaner phones to help you get back up and running. Finally, because Best Buy offers a number of other products outside the mobile realm, associates can demonstrate how your phone or wireless service can interact with other devices such as your laptop. ●

# Digital Voice Recorders

**Better Quality, More Features  
& Prices That Match The User**



Olympus' VN-5000, WS-210S, and WS-321M digital voice recorders; \$39.99, \$79.99, \$99.99, respectively ([www.olympusamerica.com](http://www.olympusamerica.com))

## Before You Press Record, Remember . . .

**T**he higher the recording quality, the more recording time you'll exhaust.

Recordings made to proprietary file formats are more difficult to share among many users.

Models with multiple directional mics typically capture better quality and are better suited for large areas.

Higher-quality recordings generally produce more accurate results in speech-recognition applications. ●

**R**ecording audio. That's always been the function of voice recorders, whether recording a memo, grocery list, song demo, lecture, or interview. Yesterday's voice recorders archived analog data to tape cassettes. Today's recorders record digitally to internal flash memory and/or removable memory cards. Yesterday's models made transcribing a press play, pause, rewind, and repeat nightmare. Today's models have multiple playback speeds (including slow). Yesterday's players only played back cassettes. Today's models play back MP3, WMA, and other files in stereo and possibly through built-in speakers. And that's just the beginning.

Digital voice recorder prices range from about \$40 to more than \$400. Nearly all models are pocket-sized and built to last for years. What changes across price

points is recording quality. The higher up the price ladder, the better support you'll find for capturing recordings with lower compression (more data recorded) and higher sampling rates (more realistic sound), with some recorders approaching studio quality. Even models around \$40, though, usually have at least two microphones; multiple recording modes; a USB port for PC connections; headphone jack; internal memory; and an LCD to view recording mode, date, time, battery power, and other info. Olympus' VN-5000 (\$39.99; [www.olympus.com](http://www.olympus.com)), for example, offers three recording modes (High Quality included), slow and fast playback, and an LCD.

Higher-priced models should net you voice-activation abilities (great for physicians), an external mic jack (band sessions and interviews), four-way directional microphones (boardroom meetings), storage of nonaudio files (photos, email, etc.),

and possibly several gigabytes of internal storage (great for mobile pros and students storing multiple sales pitches and lectures). Other possibilities include onboard noise cancellation to reduce ambient noise, XLR jacks for professional-level recording, timed recordings, detachable microphones, low-cut filters (which minimize interfering background noise), memory card slots, index points for bookmark-like convenience, and hi/lo-sensitivity settings (indoors vs. outdoors).

Even some inexpensive digital audio players now include voice recorders (albeit with questionable quality), so whether a dedicated digital voice recorder is worth the purchase depends on the lifestyle. If yours calls for frequently recording thoughts, opinions, and tasks, there's a digital voice recorder that can do the job and then some. **FG**

BY BLAINE FLAMIG

# Essential

## THINGS TO KNOW

### Satellite Radio

#### Sirius & XM Merger

**Q** What happened when Sirius and XM satellite radio merged?

**A** When Sirius satellite radio bought XM Radio, they formed Sirius XM Radio. The company has already begun rolling out new service plans to accommodate all listeners.

**Q** If I have an XM satellite radio, will I be able to listen to Sirius satellite radio stations and vice versa?

**A** Sirius XM has just released a new lineup of crossover stations that are accessible for both Sirius and XM Radio subscribers. For additional stations from the other provider, you will need to purchase a "Best Of" package.

**Q** What do I need to be able to enjoy both Sirius and XM Radio stations?

**A** You will need to purchase a unit that has both Sirius and XM radio satellite receivers in order to enjoy the full lineups from both providers. You will also need subscriptions to both providers.

#### Receivers

**Q** How do I receive satellite radio in my car?

**A** You'll need to select a receiver that's designed to use the service you subscribe to. You can select an in-dash model or satellite radio deck that sits on a mount in your car.

**Q** What are the advantages of an in-dash satellite radio receiver?

**A** In-dash receivers offer better reception (due to the use of a permanent external antenna) and appear less cluttered than docked models because you won't see any wires, power adapters, adhesive docks, or suction cup mounts.

**Q** What are the advantages of a docked satellite radio receiver?

**A** With a satellite radio dock, you can purchase multiple mounting kits and share the docked receiver among vehicles. With the right accessories, you can also use the satellite radio receiver within your home.



## Service

**Q** How far does satellite radio reach?

**A** XM and Sirius offer service in the continental United States and Canada, so you should be able to listen to your favorite channel anywhere within this coverage area.

**Q** What types of channels are available?

**A** With satellite radio, you'll be able to find a station for just about any mood, including talk radio, sports, comedy, modern pop, classic rock, modern country, alternative, adult contemporary, R&B, jazz, classical, Latin, modern Hip Hop, Christian, classic country, and many more.

**Q** Can I get traffic updates on my satellite radio?

**A** Yes. Many satellite radio services include traffic and weather conditions for major metropolitan areas. Check with your provider to see if this feature is available in your area. Extra charges may apply.

**Q** Can I use more than one radio?

**A** By signing up for a family plan, you'll be able to add additional radios to your initial subscription for a smaller fee than you pay for the first radio.

**Q** What subscription options are available?

**A** You can sign up for monthly service or a yearly contract. Yearly or multiyear plans generally offer a lower average monthly cost than month-to-month plans.

## Installation

**Q** Does my satellite radio system have to be compatible with a particular make and model of vehicle?

**A** Some vehicles may not support certain satellite radio products, so you'll want to verify that you can install your preferred satellite radio system in your vehicle prior to deciding which model you will use.

**Q** Does my satellite radio have to be connected to my car's ignition power source to turn on and off properly?

**A** This is a matter of personal preference. If you like, the professionals at your local CE retailer can complete this installation so that you won't have to use a power adapter in your DC lighter outlet.

**Q** Where's the best location to install the mounting bracket?

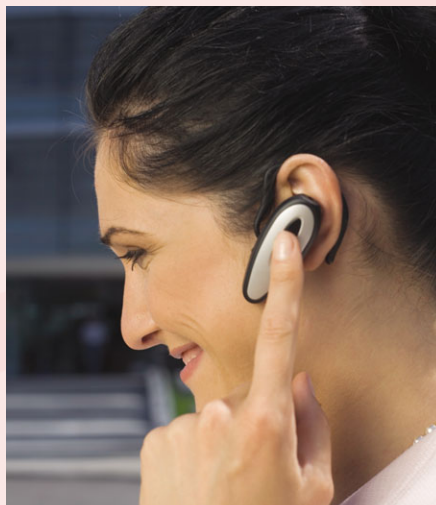
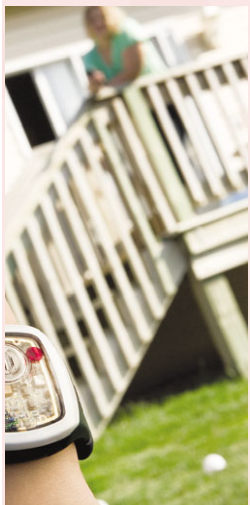
**A** Be sure you choose a spot that doesn't obstruct the console or the driver's view of the road. To easily access the radio, place the bracket no farther than arm's length away.

**Q** Where should I place the antenna on my vehicle?

**A** You'll want to install it in a location that will provide the best possible reception. Normally, this is the highest point on the exterior of your car.

**Q** What's included in a plug-n-play tuner?

**A** This kit may include the following hardware and accessories: a cradle, a DC power adapter, a mini jack-to-RCA cord, a cassette tape adapter, and an antenna.



# MP3 Players

## 5 Must-Have Accessories

**N**ailing down a list of must-have accessories for an MP3 player is tricky. Just because an iPod dock for the kitchen tops your list, for example, doesn't mean it even cracks an avid jogger's Top 5. Ultimately, though, five general categories stand out, although other notable accessories include extra batteries, cleaning kits, and Bluetooth adapters. **FG**

BY BLAINE FLAMIG

1

**Match your earphones to your needs.** Sometimes a runner doesn't fare well with earbuds, which fall out because of the constant jostle of running. This is a burden for anyone hoping to get in a good workout. A runner should opt for headphones that are secure, and in this case, an in-the-ear earbud would be the ideal choice. Headphone styles are numerous and include wired/wireless earbuds, which are perfect for people on the go (students, mass-transit users), and earcups, which can satisfy any audiophile's need to hear minute musical details.

2

**Portable speakers and docks are perfect for letting the entire group listen to tunes in open areas.** Whether you want to listen to Enya as you take shelter from a winter storm or need some musical motivation as you shovel the snow blanketing your driveway, there's no limit to where you can listen to your portable player. Don't let the pair of headphones that came with your player constrain you, either. Most speakers have a dock to recharge your player's battery. Check your MP3 player manufacturer's Web site for model numbers of available speakers and docks.



3

**Beam the tunes on your portable music player through your car stereo.** If you're motoring about in the family van, music players can provide the soundtrack. You'll need an FM transmitter that plays the tunes on your portable music player over your car radio. Connect the transmitter to your player, select a designated frequency on the radio, tune to that same frequency on your transmitter, and listen to music, movies, podcasts, audio-books, etc. Transmitters range from basic to sophisticated models (providing remote controls and visual interfaces), making it easy to find one that suits your needs.



4

**Cases can protect your portable music player from scratches, bumps, water, physical drops, and mishaps that can otherwise shorten your player's life.** You decided to treat yourself and buy a high-end MP3 player. Because you've already spent so much, it's only right to assume that you have everything you need, right? Not quite. No matter what type of portable music player you own, it's wise to buy a case to protect it in different environments. Cases are relatively inexpensive (starting at around \$20) and can provide a little protection from minor drops or normal wear and tear. Because cases are designed to work with specific players, check the MP3 player manufacturer's Web site for cases that are compatible.

5

**Armbands can mean the difference between a workout you're proud of vs. one that is constantly interrupted by accidental drops and tugging, tangled cords.** Without a doubt, music is a huge motivator when it comes to exercise. No matter your sport, an armband that fits around your bicep offers stability for your portable music player and comfort for you. And for workouts that don't jostle your player, such as riding an exercise bike, a lanyard provides an inexpensive, effective alternative to an armband.



# Digital Recorder

## Easy Operation & Superior Audio In A Stylish Package



### Olympus WS-210 S Digital Voice Recorder

**MSRP: \$79.99**

SKU: 8944182

[www.olympusamerica.com](http://www.olympusamerica.com)

#### Quick Overview

Easily record lectures, notes, and more in high-quality stereo sound with the compact, stylish WS-210 S from Olympus. Store and organize your files on the WS-210 S, and transfer them to your PC with the easy-to-use "USB Direct" design. Simply plug the recorder into a computer, with no USB cable necessary, for easy downloading of audio files, documents, image files, and more!

#### Perfect For

Professionals and students who need to record meetings, memos, lectures, and ideas in high-quality stereo sound, as well as transfer files easily.

#### Outstanding Benefits

- Built-in stereo microphones
- 512MB internal flash memory
- WMA recording format
- 138 hours of recording time in LP mode
- Variable Control Voice Activator records only when sound is sensed
- Long-life battery lasts for 19 hours of continuous operation
- Five file folders; each can hold up to 200 files
- Acts as a storage device, allowing a variety of file formats to be stored
- Lock files to avoid their being accidentally erased
- High-speed USB 2.0 provides fast download times

#### Coollest Feature

Nothing is easier than using the WS-210 S's "USB Direct" design to plug the device into a computer USB port to quickly download or upload files.

ZOOM

## Digital Recorder Brilliant Stereo Recording



### Zoom H2 Handy Recorder

MSRP: \$179.99

SKU: 8890293

[www.zoomh2.net](http://www.zoomh2.net)

### Quick Overview

The portable H2 Handy Recorder has the ability to effortlessly record anything with unparalleled depth and clarity. While most digital recorders have fixed recording angles, the H2 allows you to set your mic patterns to the best configuration for the situation. This added flexibility, means you will always be ready to capture the moment and get the best possible sound.

### Perfect For

Recording musical performances, songwriting sessions, or rehearsals. Also great for podcasters, journalists, events planners, web designers and even law professionals

### Outstanding Benefits

- Four high-quality condenser microphones allow you to capture two-channel, four-channel, or 360-degree recordings
- Built-in USB 2.0 interface connects you to a PC or other USB devices
- Records in WAV 96kHz/48kHz/44.1kHz at 16- or 24-bit rates, as well as MP3 to 320kbps, and VBR (variable bit rate) data formats
- Time Stamp and Track Marker functions allows easy access to specific points in and label your audio recordings
- 512MB SD card included; can use up to 16GB SD or SDHC memory cards
- Auto gain control adjusts recording levels in variable audio settings; Auto start means you're always ready to capture the moment.

### Coollest Feature

Select the four-channel recording mode to **convert your digital audio into 5.1 Surround Sound**. No other digital audio recorder offers this capability!



# iPhone & iPod Speaker

## Premium Versatility In A Portable Stereo System



Altec Lansing iMT702  
inMotion MAX

MSRP: \$199.95

SKU: 8948918

[www.alteclansing.com](http://www.alteclansing.com)

### Quick Overview

Go anywhere and take your music with you. Either battery powered or plugged in, the inMotion Max churns out lush stereo sound from your iPhone or iPod, or from the unit's built-in FM radio. XdB technology supplies the deep bass without a subwoofer. And ESS sound-widening technology expands the sound to fit any room. And the inMotion Max lets you take calls from your iPhone.

### Perfect For

Those with an ear for sound and want their music no matter where they are!

### Outstanding Benefits

- **Crystal-clear Sound** – Precision-matched speakers with ESS and XdB audio technologies deliver crisp, full-spectrum sound
- **FM Radio** – Features 4 station presets and wire antenna for superior reception. LCD displays song and FM station data
- **Rechargeable Battery** – The Li-Ion battery provides up to 3.5 hours of playing time
- **Perfect for Travel** – Folds up compactly and can serve as a wake-up call by enabling the iPhone and iPod alarm and sleep timer
- **Auxiliary Input** – Connect a second audio source via 3.5mm input jack

### Coollest Feature

The inMotion MAX is immune to mobile phone interference so your iPhone can stay on, always ready to take calls. The music automatically pauses when a call rings in and resumes when finished.



# Wireless PC & iPod Speaker

## Wireless Audio Freedom For Your Digital Lifestyle



### Mint 220 Wireless Digital Music Station

**MSRP: \$134.99**

SKU: 8750336

[www.mintds.com](http://www.mintds.com)

### Quick Overview

A cool, new way to listen to all audio from your computer! The Mint high-fidelity iPod dock speaker comes with a USB Wireless Audio Card that connects to your PC or Mac, which means you can enjoy all of your music content online and your computer's music players, completely unattached from the speaker. Simply plug the USB Audio Card into your computer and stream all of your audio wirelessly—with zero loss of fidelity—up to 45 feet.

### Perfect For

Any PC/iPod owner who craves crisp, room-filling sound without sacrificing portability.

### Outstanding Benefits

- **Lossless 2.4GHz wireless audio streaming from your Mac or PC** with the included Mint USB Wireless Audio Card, no extra software needed
- **Precise, high-fidelity audio performance** usually found only in more expensive systems—provided by Digital Signature's patented digital engineering and sealed enclosure design
- **Multimedia versatility** through the audio mini-jack (Line-in) port—enjoy the Mint's Digital Fidelity™ sound from your MP3 players, games, and much more

### Coollest Feature

#### Plug-and-Play Wireless Connectivity:

1. Plug the Mint USB Wireless Audio Card into your computer's USB port.
2. Play any of your music players or Internet music/videos on your computer.
3. Enjoy the high-fidelity Mint sound wirelessly from across the room. That's as simple as it can get.



# GPS

## Your Favorites At Your Fingertips™



Magellan®  
Maestro™ 4370

MSRP: \$399.99

SKU: 9039257

[www.magellangps.com](http://www.magellangps.com)

### Quick Overview

Effortless navigation! The Magellan® Maestro™ 4370's new OneTouch™ feature gives you instant access to your favorite places and searches. Simply customize the OneTouch menu to display the points of interest you want easy access to—restaurants, banks, businesses, and so many more.

### Perfect For

GPS users who want to be in control of their travel experiences and want easy access to their favorite places available at the touch of their fingertips.

### Outstanding Benefits

- **4.3" WVGA color touchscreen** provides clear, crisp on-screen graphics and seamless touch panel
- **OneTouch menu** lets you create shortcuts to your favorite destinations, points of interest, and searches
- **Announces street names** and directions at each turn
- **Bluetooth® compatibility** enables hands-free calling with compatible phones
- **Lane guidance** for confident highway driving
- **Pedestrian mode** allows you to continue on your route once you've parked your car

### Coollest Feature

The customizable OneTouch™ menu truly enables you to make your Maestro 4370 device your own.

BlackBerry Storm



# Smartphone

## World's First Touch Screen BlackBerry® Smartphone Exclusively From Verizon Wireless



BlackBerry® Storm™  
9530 smartphone

MSRP: To Be Determined

SKU: 9118929

[www.blackberrystorm.com](http://www.blackberrystorm.com)

[www.verizonwireless.com/storm](http://www.verizonwireless.com/storm)



### Quick Overview

With cutting-edge multimedia capabilities and a sleek design, the BlackBerry Storm smartphone makes a great impression no matter where you're headed. The BlackBerry Storm smartphone's unique touch screen allows you to accurately navigate its advanced features, such as a media player, 3.2MP camera, and a full HTML browser. Plus you'll be able to enhance your productivity with the ability to view and edit MS Word®, Excel®, and PowerPoint® files.

### Perfect For

Those who want to play as hard as they work.

### Outstanding Benefits

- Touch and Click. A touch screen that allows you to be as accurate as ever, with SurePress™.
- Wireless email, instant messaging and text messaging (SMS and MMS).
- Watch streaming video and navigate the web at 3G speeds.
- Built-in GPS with BlackBerry® Maps and VZ Navigator™ capable.
- Easy-to-use 3.2 megapixel camera.
- Built-in media player to listen to music and watch videos.
- BroadbandAccess Connect capable.
- Bluetooth® capability and built-in speakerphone.
- Email and browse the Internet in over 150 countries.

### Coollest Feature

The SurePress™ touch screen uses groundbreaking touch and click response functionality so you can feel your selections as you make them.

\* BlackBerry®, RIM®, Research In Motion®, SureType® and related trademarks, names and logos are the property of Research In Motion Limited and are registered and/or used in the U.S. and countries around the world. Subject to Customer Agmt & Calling Plan. Device capabilities: Add'l charges & conditions apply. Coverage not available everywhere.

FirstGlimpse



## Cell Phone & iPod Accessory Invisible Protection For Your Device



### ZAGG™ invisibleSHIELD™ Screen and Full body Protector For Device

#### MSRP: Front Screen \$19.99

SKU: 8916701 (Samsung Instinct)  
SKU: 8916694 (Apple iPhone 3G)  
SKU: 9071611 (LG Dare)  
SKU: 9122415 (HTC, select phones)  
SKU: 9122442 (BlackBerry Storm)

#### MSRP: Full Body \$24.99

SKU: 9073619 (Apple iPod Nano)  
SKU: 9073628 (iPod Touch)

[www.zagg.com](http://www.zagg.com)

### Quick Overview

invisibleSHIELD's pre-cut clear film not only guards your smartphone's screen against bumps and scratches—it protects your entire device. The thin patented film cover doesn't add bulk to your device and helps to improve grip, making it easier for you to keep a safe grasp on your investment.

### Perfect For

If you have invested in a smartphone, you will want to consider this simple and inexpensive way to protect it without adding the bulk of a case.

### Outstanding Benefits

- SHIELDS are available to fit BlackBerry Pearl, Curve, Storm and 8800 models; Samsung Instinct, Eternity, and Propel; LG Dare; Apple iPhone 3G; select HTC phones; iPod nano 4th Gen and iPod touch 2nd Gen
- ZAGG's Nano-Memory Technology™ invisibleSHIELD™ film is custom-cut to protect a specific device, ensuring a perfect fit
- Guards against bumps and scratches
- Doesn't add bulk, making your device easy to dock
- Improves grip, making it less likely you'll drop your phone
- Easy to remove without leaving behind sticky residue

### Coollest Feature

If your invisibleSHIELD™ is damaged while doing its job—protecting your gadgets—ZAGG™ will replace it for as long as you own your device.

# iPod & MP3 Player Accessories

## The Ultimate Viewing Experience For Your Video iPod



### Myvu Crystal Made For iPod

**MSRP: \$299.95**

SKU: 8887537

[www.myvu.com](http://www.myvu.com)

iPod sold separately

### Quick Overview

Featuring SolidOptex<sup>®</sup>—the Myvu patented optical system—Myvu Crystal transforms your portable media player into a hands-free, full-screen, private viewing experience. All that within the thinnest, lightest, and most durable video eyewear available.

### Perfect For

Take Crystal with you on-the-go to enjoy your iPod's content comfortably and privately. Lose yourself in a truly superior video and audio experience.

### Outstanding Benefits

- Compatible with most iPod video models, including sixth-generation iPods
- Sunglasses-style personal media viewer headset lets you watch music videos, movies, and more hands-free
- Built-in rechargeable battery with up to four hours of battery life
- Comfortable, sound-isolating earbud headphones
- Full VGA-quality viewing with a field of view 33% wider than previously available
- Includes USB cable, two additional earbuds, and connector cables
- 50-inch cord for ultimate ease of use

### Coollest Feature

This viewer comes complete with a specially designed cable to plug directly into your iPod, allowing a seamless connection.

## Which MP3 Player Is Best For You?




Pods are cool, sure, but you have other choices when it comes to listening to your tunes. This chart compares the most important—and coolest—features from select MP3 players.

		Memory type	Capacities	Songs	Video; FM tuner capabilities	Colors	Battery life
What It Means		Hard drive (moving parts, more capacity) or flash (no moving parts)	How much memory the player has (on models available at Best Buy)	Based on four-minute songs at 128Kbps, the number a player can hold	Some MP3 players can play video or let you listen to radio stations	Several players offer a variety of color choices	How long the battery will last when playing music
	<b>SanDisk Sansa Clip</b> MSRP: \$79.99* SKU 8753976	Flash	4GB	2,000 (WMA)	Only an FM tuner	Silver	15 hours
	<b>SanDisk Sansa Fuze</b> MSRP: \$79.99*; \$99.99*; \$129.99* SKU 8753789	Flash	2GB; 4GB; 8GB	500; 1,000; 2,000	Both	Black, red, pink, blue	24 hours
	<b>Apple iPod nano</b> MSRP: \$149*; \$199* SKU 8772964	Flash	8GB; 16GB	2,000; 4,000 (AAC)	Only video	Silver, black, purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, red, pink	24 hours
	<b>Microsoft Zune 8GB</b> MSRP: \$149.99* SKU 9008502	Flash	8GB	2,000	Both	Blue	24 hours
	<b>Philips GoGear SA5285BT/37</b> MSRP: \$149.99* SKU 9011598	Flash	8GB	N/A	Both	Black	30 hours
	<b>Samsung P2</b> MSRP: \$199.99*; \$249.99* SKU 8627961	Flash	4GB; 8GB	N/A	Both	Black, burgundy	30 hours
	<b>Apple iPod touch</b> MSRP: \$229*; \$299*; \$399* SKU 8772063	Flash	8GB; 16GB; 32GB	1,750; 3,500; 7,000 (AAC)	Only video	Black	36 hours
	<b>Apple iPod classic</b> MSRP: \$249* SKU 8772036	Hard drive	120GB	30,000 (AAC)	Only video	Black, silver	36 hours

\*Prices listed in this issue are for general reference and may vary from retailer pricing.

## Which GPS Device Is Right For You?

One of the hottest CE devices around right now is a GPS device, and what a useful device it is, too. Here, we compare some models available on today's market. All of these units come with maps already loaded, and you can purchase additional maps, as well.

		Screen size; Dimensions	Text-to- speech; Traffic receiver	Preloaded maps	WAAS	Bluetooth; MP3 play- back	Included charging adapters
	<b>What It Means</b>	The diagonal measurement of the screen; Height x width x depth	Unit calls out specific street names; Unit receives traffic updates and re-routes accordingly	The regional maps that come included with the GPS unit	A satellite and ground station system that gives exceptional GPS accuracy	Some units communicate wirelessly with other Bluetooth devices or play MP3s	AC adapters plug into the wall; DC adapters plug into your car's cigarette lighter
	<b>TomTom ONE 130</b> MSRP: \$149.99* SKU 8774463	3.5 inches; 3.8x3.2x1 inches	No; No	Entire U.S. (including Puerto Rico) and Canada	No	No; No	DC adapter
	<b>Garmin nüvi 260</b> MSRP: \$299.99* SKU 8474279	3.5 inches; 2.8x3.8x0.8 inches	Yes; No	Entire U.S. (including Puerto Rico)	No	No; No	DC adapter
	<b>Insignia NS-CNV10</b> MSRP: \$399* SKU 8947287	3.5 inches; 3.21x4x0.9 inches	Yes; Yes	Entire U.S. (including Puerto Rico)	Yes	No; Yes	DC adapter; AC adapter
	<b>Magellan RoadMate 1430</b> MSRP: \$399.99* SKU 9039266	3.5 inches; 3.2x3.6x0.6 inches	Yes; No	Entire U.S. (including Puerto Rico) and Canada	Yes	No; No	DC adapter
	<b>TomTom GO 730</b> MSRP: \$449.95* SKU 8774533	4.3 inches; 3.3x4.7x1 inches	Yes; Yes	Entire U.S. (including Puerto Rico) and Canada	No	Yes; Yes	DC adapter
	<b>Insignia NS-CNV20</b> MSRP: \$499* SKU 8947312	4.3 inches; 3.21x4.68x0.9 inches	Yes; Yes	Entire U.S. (including Puerto Rico)	Yes	Yes; No	DC adapter; AC adapter
	<b>Magellan Maestro 4370</b> MSRP: \$399.99* SKU 9039257	5 inches; 4.65x3.26x0.7 inches	Yes; Yes	Entire U.S. (including Puerto Rico) and Canada	Yes	Yes; Yes	DC adapter; AC adapter
	<b>Garmin nüvi 765T</b> MSRP: \$599.99* SKU 8956089	4.3 inches; 3x4.8x0.8 inches	Yes; Yes	Entire U.S. (including Puerto Rico) and Canada	No	Yes; Yes	DC adapter

\*Prices listed in this issue are for general reference and may vary from retailer pricing.

# As White As Snow

CE devices are no longer limited to the bland black and gray tones that used to line CE retailers' shelves. White gadgets are everywhere, and these are just some of the portable winter whites you can tote with you in the snow.



## Nokia E71 Cell Phone (Unlocked)

A great device to have on hand when you're stranded in an unexpected winter white-out. \$459.99



## Nintendo DS Lite

On bitterly cold days, keep the kids busy indoors so they won't get the sniffles. \$129.99



## Apple MacBook with 13.3" Display

As light as a snowflake to keep your multimedia near. \$1,149.99



## Nikon CoolPix S60 Digital Camera

Capture every moment of family and friends gliding down the snow-filled slopes. \$349.99



## SimpleTech Signature Mini 250GB External Hard Drive

Small in size but big in storage to bring your kids' photos and videos to holiday gatherings. \$99.99



## Samsung S2 Pebble 1GB MP3 Player

Jam out like a rock star and thrash in the snow with your favorite tunes. \$39.99



## Garmin nüvi 205 Portable GPS

Correctly find your way through the winter flurries. \$199.99

# Get All The Details

on new CE products with *First Glimpse's* product profile sections

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